

Hegel's Thought in Europe

Currents, Crosscurrents
and Undercurrents

Edited by Lisa Herzog



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Also by Lisa Herzog

INVENTING THE MARKET: Smith, Hegel, and Political Theory

Hegel's Thought in Europe

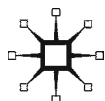
Currents, Crosscurrents and Undercurrents

Edited by

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Gilles Marmasse is Maître de conférences at the Sorbonne. He has translated and edited Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Nature*, and has published extensively on Hegel. One of the important books that he has published is *Penser le réel. Hegel, la nature et l'esprit* (2008). His articles have appeared in journals such as *Wiener Jahrbuch für Philosophie* and *Hegel-Studien*. He has recently published *Force et fragilité des normes. Les Principes de la philosophie du droit de Hegel* (2011).

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Vadim Shkolnikov received a PhD in Russian literature from Columbia University and now teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Russian Idealism, 1837–1954*.

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List of Abbreviations of Works by G.W.F. Hegel

- Aesth. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Trans. T.M. Knox (two volumes). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Enc I *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. Trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting and H.S. Harris. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.
Quoted by paragraph.
- Enc II *Philosophy of Nature: Part II of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. Trans. Michael John Perry. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970.
Quoted by paragraph.
- Enc III *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part III of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. Trans. William Wallace and A.V. Miller. Revised with introduction and commentary by M. Inwood. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.
Quoted by paragraph.
- SL *Science of Logic* [1812/13/16] transl. by A.V. Miller. New York: Humanity Books, 1999.
- Hist *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Trans. E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simpson (3 vols.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Phil. Hist. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, vol. 12 of *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Theorie-Werkausgabe, ed. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- PR *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
Trans. H.B. Nisbet (ed.) A.W. Wood Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Quoted by paragraph. Z marks the *Zusätze* to the paragraphs.
- PS *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Introduction: Hegel's Thought in Europe

Lisa Herzog

Rankings of all kinds are one of the joys of the internet age: a vote entitled 'So who is the most important philosopher of the past 200 years', cast in 2009 among 600 readers of an US-based philosophy blog,¹ revealed G. W. F. Hegel to be sixth, after Wittgenstein, Frege, Russell, Mill and Quinte, then followed by Kripke, Nietzsche, Marx and Kierkegaard. Hegel is the first thinker on the list who would be labelled 'continental' rather than 'analytic', and he is also the oldest of the top six. One wonders, however, whether those who gave Hegel a high score in this tournament did so for the same reasons. Did they vote for the metaphysician who developed a system of pure speculative thought that claimed to describe the movement of pure thinking? Or did they remember the achievements of the philosopher of art who wrote extensively about the history of artistic representation from ancient times to the nineteenth century? Was their judgment one about the political philosopher who celebrated the 'reasonable state' in which subjective and objective freedom are united? Or did Hegel receive their votes because he scored in so many fields, as a decathlete of philosophy, as it were, and maybe one of the last ones in the history of Western philosophy?

Hegel is a chameleon. While his position as one of the most influential philosophers in recent history cannot be doubted (even if one may doubt the epistemic value of rankings like the one previously mentioned), he is also notoriously obscure. The blurb of a recent biography refers to his reputation of 'being one of the most abstruse and impenetrable of thinkers'.² He wanted to apprehend his 'own time [...] in thoughts'³ and erected a magnificent philosophical system for this purpose, but shortly after his death his followers split into left- and right-wing Hegelians, giving testimony to the fact that there is more

than one way of understanding him. Today, some think that the sooner he is forgotten, the better, while others take him to be *the* philosopher of modernity.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel⁴ was born in 1770, the son of a civil servant at the court of Stuttgart. He grew up in protestant Württemberg, and went to study at the University of Tübingen, where he not only met Kant's revolutionary ideas, but also other thinkers such as the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854), who would become another important figure of 'German idealism', and the poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843). The three students shared a room in the *Stift*, a foundation for students of protestant theology, and had intense discussions about topics ranging from philosophy to politics and the arts.⁵ After his studies, Hegel became a private tutor for aristocratic families in Bern (1793–1796) and Frankfurt (1797–1801). In 1801, Schelling invited him to join him at the University of Jena, where he took up an academic career. In 1807, his *Phenomenology of Spirit* was published. Before securing a permanent position, however, Hegel spent long years as editor of a daily journal in Bamberg, and as headmaster of a *Gymnasium* in Nürnberg. In 1816, he received an offer for a professorship in Heidelberg. In 1817, he published *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, which summarized the lectures he gave there. In 1818, he took up a chair at the Humboldt University in Berlin, publishing, in 1820, his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. He lectured in Berlin until the end of his life in 1831, attracting increasing numbers of students both from the German-speaking countries and from abroad. Numerous lecture notes, both by himself and by his students, have been preserved and edited in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

The ways in which Hegel's philosophy has been received are so varied and colourful that it is sometimes hard to believe that they all refer back to the same source of inspiration. Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), himself a philosopher of admirable breadth, once wrote that '[t]here is perhaps no better and more striking example of the dialectical character of history than the fate of Hegelianism itself'.⁶ But this sentence immediately raises questions: what is dialectic? How can this concept be applied to post-Hegelian history if Hegel himself claimed that history had come to an end? What is meant by 'Hegelianism' at all?

In a broad and comparative perspective, this volume samples central strands of the reception of Hegel's thought in Europe. The chapters discuss the many ways in which his philosophy was read, from the psychological struggles of the young Russian intelligentsia of the 1830s to British Idealism or Alexandre Kojève's unconventional

reading of the master-slave dialectic. The authors come from different disciplines, from Slavic studies to intellectual history, political theory and theoretical philosophy. Their chapters describe personal and academic, 'existentialist' and 'deconstructivist' ways of relating to Hegel's philosophy. The volume is structured around four geographical regions – Eastern Europe, Germany and Scandinavia, Great Britain, Italy and France – embedding the reception of Hegel in the intellectual developments in these regions.

The focus of this volume is on *European* receptions, which means that strands of thought such as American pragmatism or the influence of Hegelian thought on African and Asian thinkers are not covered. This emphasizes the many and complex mutual influences among the different receptions, which are more intense in the European context, where there were numerous personal and cultural ties between the different countries. Within Europe, the chapters are clustered around four geographical regions in which important lines of reception developed. One important way in which Hegel's philosophy indirectly influenced world-history is omitted, however: the reception by Marx, who claimed to have turned Hegel from the head to the feet,⁷ and by later Marxists.⁸ This strand of Hegelianism – to which Cassirer also refers in the sentence quoted above – is relatively well-known, whereas many of the receptions covered in this volume have received little attention in Anglophone scholarship.

This volume is the first to offer a broad perspective on different European non-Marxist receptions of Hegel's philosophy in their different social and cultural contexts. While it does not aim at a complete overview – completeness itself being a questionable (although maybe in some sense 'Hegelian') ideal in this context – the chapters of this volume offer a fascinating sample of lines of reception with numerous interconnections between them. Some chapters take a more historical approach, whereas others present detailed systematic reflections about the philosophical quality of different kinds of Hegelianism. This reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the volume, but it also shows at how many different levels, in what different ways, Hegel's ideas have aroused the interest of later-day thinkers. While presupposing a basic familiarity with Hegelian concepts and ideas, the chapters present these receptions in an accessible manner that is suited for those scholarly engaged with philosophy or the history of ideas, but also for students of philosophy or European history.

Bringing together different ways in which Hegel's philosophy has been taken up, this volume has three purposes. First, it exemplifies

important strands in the European history of the nineteenth and twentieth century and shows a common thread that unites different cultural and intellectual developments which, at first glance, may seem to have little in common. The way in which Hegel's thought travelled through history and was taken up by different thinkers in different places is a fascinating example of the power of ideas, and of the many different ways in which connecting to one's past can offer inspiration for thinking a new future.

Second, it sheds light on Hegelian philosophy itself – its complexity, its multifacetedness, its relation to religion, history or politics. Just as we can rediscover, say, a poem by Rilke when we discover its lines in one of Cy Twombly's abstract paintings, we can rediscover Hegel, or aspects of his thought, in the different facets of 'Hegelianism'. Held in Oxford in June 2010, the conference on which this volume is based was called *The many colours of Hegelianism*.⁹ The different Hegelianisms resemble rays of light of different wavelengths, coming from a single source, but separated by the prisms of later cultural and intellectual contexts. Analysing them thus also tells us something about the nature and character of their source. As becomes clear, one central question is this context concerns the systematic approach of Hegel's philosophical system: is this a path to philosophy that can still be taken today, or did this great system have to fail precisely because of its claim to encompass all branches of philosophy and to capture all essential aspects of reality.

Third, the chapters of this volume can be read as case studies about how philosophy interacts with the so-called 'real world'. How people philosophize, and what kind of philosophy they hold to be possible, is impacted by their historical and personal experiences. The chapters show which aspects of Hegel's thought were taken up in which context, and how they then influenced the intellectual trajectories of different thinkers. For everyone who is interested in philosophy not only as a theoretical enterprise, but also as a human practice – or a human practice *qua* theoretical enterprise – the different receptions of Hegel's thought offer intriguing cases in point.

Overview of the chapters

Part I, 'Hegel's Thought in Russia and Romania', discusses non-Marxist receptions of Hegel's philosophy in Eastern Europe and Tsarist Russia. It is well-known that Hegel has left his footprint on Russian history via Marxism. What is less well-known is the earlier history of Russian

Hegelianism in the decades after Hegel's death. This history is discussed in the chapters by Vadim Shkolnikov (1) and Robert Harris (2).

In Chapter 1, Vadim Shkolnikov addresses the meaning of the enthusiastic uptake of Hegel's philosophy by the young intellectuals of the Stankevich circle: Belinsky, Bakunin and Herzen. It has often been held that this wave of Hegelian thinking was no more than a youthful attempt to escape the depressing realities of Tsarist Russia by turning to idealist philosophy. Shkolnikov challenges this view, and argues that it was never a complete submission to the 'self-certainty of our time', but rather an important moment in the development of the oppositional intelligentsia. As he shows, this first phase of Russian Hegelianism cannot be understood without taking into account the intense psychological struggles of these young intellectuals, which he calls 'the crisis of the beautiful soul'. It revolved around the passivity of the 'beautiful soul' in contrast to the activity of Hegelian 'spirit', a contrast that these thinkers applied directly to their own situation. It led Belinsky into a phase of 'reconciliation with reality', which, however, can be understood as an expression of the desire to overcome 'abstract heroism'. Ultimately, studying Hegel set these thinkers on the path towards political action.

In Chapter 2, Robert Harris takes us a step further in the development of Hegelianism in Tsarist Russia, by focusing on Chicherin and Herzen and their dispute over the meaning of Hegel's political philosophy, and in particular his notion of 'Rechtsstaat', in the 1860s. By then, Timofei Granovsky, professor of history at Moscow University, had introduced his own version of Hegelianism into Russia. Harris describes Granovsky's intellectual development, and then turns to one of his most important students, Boris Chicherin, who became a leading historian, jurist and philosopher. Alexander Herzen, another leading intellectual whom Harris discusses, had equally gone through a phase of enthusiasm for German idealist philosophy, and stood in exchange with Belinsky and Bakunin, the characters discussed in Shkolnikov's chapter. Herzen's liberal humanism and Chicherin's deferential attitude towards the state clashed, however, during the student protests of 1861: Chicherin pushed for the abrogation of their rights to assemble and to publish their views, while Herzen argued for the rights of the individual, which he valued higher than theoretical concepts of the state and of public order. As Harris shows, what Herzen emphasized much more than Chicherin were the historical dynamics and the revolutionary force of Hegel's philosophy, which turned out to be more influential for Russian history than the readings that saw the Tsarist empire as an incarnation of the rational state.

This reception of Hegelian ideas by the members of the Russian intelligentsia was extremely 'personal'; it reminds one of the way in which Nietzsche became a personal hero for many young people at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. First-hand knowledge of the texts or detailed scholarly analysis did not play a central role; what mattered was the application of philosophical ideas to the life and historical situation of the readers. Although the group of 'Hegelians' was small, however, there was strong disagreement about the meaning of Hegel's philosophy, in particular his political philosophy. With this, the Russian Hegelians were by no means alone – it is a recurring theme in the history of Hegelianism that thinkers who were close at first broke over alternative readings of Hegel.

The third chapter in this section discusses a reception of Hegel in Eastern Europe, which, to the best of my knowledge, is here for the first time presented to an Anglophone audience: Edward Kanterian tells the story of Hegelianism in Romania – a 'story' indeed, because one here finds one of the most curious instances of what Hegel's thought inspired, namely a recounting of the *Phenomenology* as a tale. Kanterian discusses two examples of the nineteenth century-reception of Hegel in Romania, by philosopher Titu Maiorescu and poet Mihai Eminescu. He then turns to the twentieth century, and analyses Dumitru D. Roșca's introduction of Hegelian scholarship into Romania; Roșca, however, opted for a compromise with the official line of the Communist party. The main focus of this chapter is on Constantin Noica, one of the most important Romanian philosophers of the twentieth century, and author of the aforementioned 'tale' of the *Phenomenology*. Kanterian describes Noica's intellectual development from a strict metaphysical dualism to a broadly Hegelian metaphysical position. He considers different interpretations of the relation between Noica's 'tale' and Hegel's *Phenomenology*, suggesting that for Noica both were part of the historical process of the development of the human spirit in time. As in the case of tsarist Russia, these receptions of Hegelian philosophy are influenced by the political developments in their respective countries: Roșca accommodated himself to the official ideology, whereas Noica, while having fascist affinities during war time, was put under arrest and incarcerated by the Communist party. What kind of Hegel scholar one decided to be was far more than a theoretical question under these circumstances.

The reception of Hegel's philosophy in Lutheran Northern Europe – Germany and Scandinavia – is extremely complex and multifaceted. The strong cultural commonalities, rooted in particular in a certain liberal bourgeois milieu (as well as the rejection reactions it provoked) and

the strong mutual influences between these countries form a common resonance chamber, in which Hegel was taken up in different ways, in which surprising 'family resemblances' can nonetheless be found. The receptions presented in Part II comprise a range of 'existentialist', 'political' and 'academic' receptions in Germany and an important strand of Scandinavian Hegelianism: the Danish reception and Kierkegaard's existential turn against it.

In Chapter 4, Widukind De Ridder and Douglas Moggach introduce the generation of progressive thinkers who have become known as the 'young Hegelians'. Their aim was to continue and carry further the Enlightenment impulse of Hegel's philosophy, which they understood primarily as a philosophy of freedom. De Ridder and Moggach discuss the republicanism and the 'humanist transformation' of young Hegelian thought, emphasizing their contribution to a specific tradition in political theory: the Enlightenment impulse to focus on the individual's freedom and to emancipate it from traditional relationships. The authors then focus on the debates, seldom taken into account so far, around Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1844), one of the most pungent critics of the leading Hegelian, Bruno Bauer. Stirner challenged the possibility of an immanent critique of Hegelian philosophy and rejected the emancipatory claims of the young Hegelians. He endorsed a purely particularistic conception of freedom, which further illuminates the questions of reason, autonomy and liberty that were discussing by the Hegelians of the *Vormärz*, and which are still pertinent to today's political philosophy.

In Chapter 5, George Pattison discusses the reception of Hegel's philosophy in Denmark, focusing on the interplay between the Hegelian orthodoxy and Søren Kierkegaard's existential turn against it. In contrast to the reading developed by Jon Stewart, he emphasizes that Kierkegaard not only reacted to the Hegelians of his time, but also engaged with Hegelian philosophy as such. Pattison addresses several aspects of Hegel's thought that arouse Kierkegaard's suspicion, for example the abstract nature of Hegelian philosophy that neglects the situation of the thinking individual, or the idea of a 'movement' in logic. For Kierkegaard, the Hegelian system fails to do justice to the existential situation of temporal, finite human beings. In laying out these criticisms of Hegelian philosophy, Kierkegaard was influenced by his antipathy against orthodox Hegelians like Heiberg and Martensen, but, as Pattison shows, he also raised substantial philosophical criticisms, which are developed mainly in his engagement with Erdman's *Faith and Knowledge*. In particular, Kierkegaard questioned whether the kind of philosophy that Hegel aspired to is possible for the kind of beings that humans are.

Michael Inwood addresses a more ‘academic’ reception of in Chapter 6, Hegel by two of the most famous German philosophers of the twentieth century, Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger, who ended up in direct opposition to one another. As he shows, there are strong similarities between Cassirer’s philosophy of culture and Hegel’s account of the different forms of consciousness in the *Phenomenology*. Heidegger’s engagement with the *Phenomenology* can be found in his commentary on its Introduction. However, as Inwood demonstrates in a detailed textual analysis, Heidegger reads Hegel through the lens of his own philosophy, which leads to considerable distortions: Hegel is described as the last representative of traditional metaphysics. Inwood rejects this reading, emphasizing Hegel’s concerns about epistemology and the access to true knowledge, and scrutinizes different themes in this philosophical encounter, such as the question of the ‘beginning’ of philosophy – a topic we already encountered in Kierkegaard – Hegel’s relation to Descartes and Kant, the nature of Hegel’s ‘absolute’, and the distinction between apparent and real knowledge. Cassirer’s and Heidegger’s conflicting views about the nature of philosophy culminated in a debate in Davos in 1929, which can be understood as an encounter between a philosophy of culture inspired by Hegel and the turn towards a philosophy of ‘Dasein’.

In Chapter 7, Silvia Jonas discusses Theodor W. Adorno’s reaction to Hegelian metaphysics, focussing on the theoretical aspects of the latter’s thought. She starts by outlining a central feature of Hegel’s metaphysical enterprise: the idea of generating content by applying ‘determinate negations’ to thought determinations or forms of consciousness, which leads to a closed philosophical system. Adorno attacks this idea of an all-encompassing identity as ‘totalitarian’, criticizing it by drawing on the idea of the ‘Ineffable’ as that which cannot be grasped conceptually and therefore cannot be integrated into a system. Adorno’s vision of philosophy turns around this notion, which implies that philosophy has to admit from the outright that it can never achieve its goal. He transforms the Hegelian dialectic into a ‘negative dialectic’ that analyses dialectical connections but does not force the endless complexity, manifoldness and contradictoriness of reality into a single coherent system. In the conclusion, Jonas underlines the importance of these insights for contemporary philosophy: one of its central tasks, often overlooked today, is to enable ineffable insights and to recall the limits of language and thought.

In Chapter 8, David P. Schweikard tackles a crucial problem for modern approaches to Hegel that has wider systematic implications:

can and should political philosophy be pursued without metaphysical foundations? As he argues, Hegel's conception of political freedom, while in many respects similar to modern accounts, is embedded in his philosophical system and in this sense deeply metaphysical. Using Axel Honneth's *Suffering from Indeterminacy* as an example, Schweikard discusses the strengths and weaknesses of a non-metaphysical approach to Hegel's social and political philosophy. He agrees that it is not necessary to swallow Hegel's system as a whole, but points out that the question of what to accept and what to reject does not necessarily lead to the dividing line of 'political philosophy' versus 'logical foundations'. As he exemplifies by analysing Hegel's conception of the will, a modern interpretation does not have to shun Hegel's logical categories. Distinguishing between an explanatory and a justificatory reading of these categories, Schweikard concludes that whenever we can make sense of Hegel's logical claims, we should do so, rather than excluding them *a priori*.

What connects these receptions of Hegel's thinking, different as they are, is the recurring question about the nature of philosophical thought. How can one begin philosophy, and where does it end? What is the 'outside' or 'other' of philosophy? How does it relate to the existential dimension of life? By giving a firm answer to such questions, and by erecting a huge philosophical system that claims to absorb everything from the most basic logical foundations to the details of the history of art, philosophy and religion, Hegel presented a ongoing challenge to later thinkers: is this the right – or even the only – way in which philosophy is possible? For all those who today think about what philosophy is, can and should be, Hegel's system and the objections raised against it remain a highly interesting case in point.

In Great Britain, the reception of Hegel's philosophy has been marked by sharp falls and rises in popularity. The chapters in Part III discuss some aspects of this historical development: W.J. Mander provides an overview over a strand of nineteenth and twentieth century British philosophy that was dominant in its time, but is largely forgotten today: British Idealism; Gary Browning analyses Hegel's influence on Collingwood, which he also uses as a case study for discussing the problematic notion of 'influence' as such; Kenneth R. Westphal reflects on the *failures* of many contemporary philosophers to appropriate crucial Hegelian insights.

In Chapter 9, W.J. Mander starts with an overview of British Idealism, describing its main historical developments, themes and characters. Interest in Hegel's philosophy grew suddenly and rapidly in the 1860s, and remained an important strand of British philosophy until at least

1900, when analytic philosophy started to evolve as a countermovement. Mander distinguishes three types of works in this movement, which, as he underlines, showed considerable variety as well as internal change and development. In addition to translations of and commentaries on Hegel's works, which often described him as a Christian thinker, there were attempts to use Hegelian ideas, e.g., the social conception of the individual, for addressing systematic questions. But there were also numerous original works by idealist thinkers who either created their own philosophical systems or developed metaphysical theories built on Hegelian concepts. What united these thinkers was the strong indebtedness not only to Hegel, but also to other thinkers such as Kant or Plato; the focus on metaphysics – which has spurred the distrust of metaphysics that dominated much of English philosophy in the twentieth century – and last but not least the spiritual dimension and the emphasis on the social, while never giving up, in Chapter 10, the commitment to individuality and freedom.

Gary Browning analyses Hegel's influence of R. G. Collingwood, the British historian and philosopher who raised his voice against the predominance of analytic philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century. Collingwood was influenced by Hegel in manifold ways, as becomes particularly clear in Browning's analysis of his unpublished writings. Hegel's influence on Collingwood seems to correspond to the latter's theory of influence in intellectual history: past thought is not just repeated, but re-enacted and constructively re-thought by present philosophers. Thus, in his early manuscript Collingwood draws on Hegelian insights, e.g., on the interrelation between thought and reality and the developmental nature of thought, in order to criticize the philosophical orthodoxy of his day. In his later, published works, however, Collingwood either dismisses Hegel or presents him in a more unfavourable light, maybe in reaction to the hostile attitude and nationalistic prejudices that he expected from his readers. As Browning argues, this shows that Collingwood's own theory of historical influence as relatively unambiguous and straightforward is insufficient to describe the relation between Hegel and Collingwood, and is itself problematic.

The *lack* of interest amongst mainstream 'analytic' philosophy in the Anglophone world, however, is as significant as the reception by the British Idealists or Collingwood. But as Chapter 11 shows, this means that opportunities for fruitful discussion are missed. As Kenneth Westphal argues, twentieth-century Anglophone philosophy, in contrast to its roots in, for example, the Vienna circle, was characterized by declining interest in the history of philosophy and in non-English-speaking traditions. However, as Westphal demonstrates

by using the case of contemporary epistemology, it could profit from an engagement with Hegel's theoretical philosophy, which contains important arguments for rejecting central tenets of the contemporary debate, such as epistemological individualism and infallibilism about justification. These in turn imply an individualistic and ahistorical understanding of knowledge and justification, in which the mere logical possibility of a counter-example is taken to undermine claims. But as Westphal argues, for non-formal domains these assumptions are highly problematic, and the social and historical dimension of rational inquiry and justification, which structure all our concepts, need to be taken into account. Reading Hegel thus not only helps us to understand the nature of non-formal knowledge, but also explains why we should return to the history of philosophy.

The chapters in part III all point to the importance of the intellectual climate in which different thinkers reacted to Hegel's philosophy – very open in nineteenth-century Britain, but increasingly hostile afterwards. They also raise questions about the ways in which Hegelian philosophy can be used for one's own purposes, and how the ways in which this happens are influenced by the dominant attitudes towards Hegel. Hegel's philosophy never comes on its own, as it were; the ideas and prejudices *about* it always come with it, and often play a role in how Hegel is – or is not – received by later thinkers.

Part IV turns to the Romanic world and discusses a number of receptions in Italy and France. While Nico De Federicis describes a strand of Italian Hegelianism that mainly related to the *Philosophy of Right*, Gilles Marmasse discusses the reception of the *Phenomenology*, or rather one specific chapter of the *Phenomenology*, by Kojève and the parallels in Sartre's thought. Joseph Cohen's reflection on Derrida and Hegel, in contrast, explore the nature of Hegel's system and the meaning of his dialectical method.

In Chapter 12, Nico De Federicis discusses the flourishing of Hegelian thought in Italy at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The main figures of this movement were Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, who were friends at first, and then bitter enemies, and pursued two different lines of Hegelian thinking in Italy. De Federicis focuses on their debate about the 'ethical state' in the 1920s, which concerned not only the interpretation of Hegelian philosophy, but also crucial decisions in Italian politics, where Mussolini had just come into power. Gentile became the 'official' philosopher of Italian fascism and used Hegelian ideas to argue for a 'substantive' understanding of society and an 'ethical' understanding of the state. This was sharply criticized

by Croce, who defended a liberal, pluralistic understanding of freedom, building mainly on Hegel's account of 'civil society' and emphasizing the freedom of conscience. As De Federicis concludes, the split between a reading that emphasizes the significance of the political community, and one that focuses on the individual and the moral conscience, is a distinctive feature of Italian Hegelianism. While Gentile may be the more important Hegelian thinker from the perspective of *Italian* intellectual history, Croce's wider, more liberal Hegelianism better represents the spirit of Europe's philosophical inheritance.

Gilles Marmasse analyses the influence of Hegel on of the most famous French philosophers of the twentieth century, Jean-Paul Sartre, in Chapter 13, and offers a comparison to Kojève's influential reading. Hegelian thought had become popular in France in the 1930s, when Alexandre Kojève delivered his famous interpretation of the master-slave dialectic. Kojève combined Marxian and Heideggerian themes with Hegel's thought, and focussed on struggle more than on reconciliation. What Sartre shares with Kojève is the focus on the role of the Other for human consciousness, which Sartre describes as both constitutive and alienating, e.g. in his reflections on the (im)possibility of love. Marmasse sees equally striking parallels between Sartre and Hegel on the subject of finitude. While Kojève read Hegel's philosophy as bringing death to the fore, Sartre focused on human consciousness *as* nothingness and as a power of nihiliation. The Hegelian themes that appear in Kojève and Sartre are transformed from the metaphysical to an existential level; both are centred on the self-creation of the finite individual in the conflict with the Other and the nature of intersubjective relationships.

In the final Chapter (14), Joseph Cohen discusses the relation between Hegel and Jacques Derrida, who offered a radically new reading of Hegel focussing on the notions of 'Aufhebung' and negativity. Cohen argues that deconstruction is not a mode of thinking *against* Hegel, but a more radical form of speculative thinking that remains within the Hegelian spirit and amplifies and extends it, radicalizing the meaning of speculative dialectic. Derrida understands 'Aufhebung' as always creating a surplus; not as a formal structure, but as a movement of self-position, self-negating and exceeding itself. Hegel is thus for Derrida not a philosopher of static identity, but rather a thinker of difference and differentiation, Cohen argues. Derrida searched for the moments *in* Hegel's system where the radically Other would appear. A deconstructivist reading of Hegel thus always attempts to reveal the unconditional presuppositions of dialectic thought. Thus, the question arises whether there can be an 'other' that leads to an *unreconciled* movement *within* dialectic, one that

makes it possible to think dialectically without being absorbed in it. The moment of failure opens up the possibility of an irreducible other. Cohen concludes by asking whether Hegel himself might have thought possible such an 'other' future, which would go beyond the closure of his system.

The receptions of Hegel's philosophy discussed in this part thus take up very different aspects of the Hegelian system, demonstrating that it has the potential to be developed in fascist and liberal, existentialist and deconstructive positions. The question what Hegel 'really meant' almost seems to disappear behind the wide array of philosophical possibilities that his system offers.

As the volume as a whole demonstrates, the reasons why later thinkers have turned to Hegel are as varied as the reasons for turning to philosophy itself: they range from existential questions about the meaning of life and the nature of the human individual, to political questions about the role of the modern state, to 'academic' questions about nature of knowledge and many others. The differences in the historical, social, cultural and intellectual settings seem to almost outweigh the common roots. Nevertheless, none of these strands of thought would have taken the same form without Hegel's influence. As a source of inspiration or as an intellectual challenge, as a fruitful partner of dialogue or as a stumbling block and a philosophical 'other', Hegel is very much alive. And although there will be ups and downs in the interest in and popularity of his philosophy, it is likely that he will stay alive for much longer. His philosophy is highly theoretical, but it also has dramatic and deeply human aspects that have always fascinated philosophically inclined minds – and they are likely to do so in the future as well.¹⁰

Notes

1. <http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2009/03/so-who-is-the-most-important-philosopher-of-the-past-200-years.html>.
2. This quote is from the blurb of Pinkard's biography (2001).
3. PR, Introduction, 12.
4. The classic account of his life is Rosenkranz (1844), for a modern biography see Pinkard (2001).
5. Testimony of this can be found in a document later entitled 'Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus' of which the authorship is contested. See Hegel (1979), 234–237.
6. Cassirer (2009), 270.
7. Marx (1968), 27.
8. One might argue that the reception by Adorno is an exception. However, Jonas' chapter discusses his *theoretical* response to Hegel's dialectic, in which the Marxian influence does not play a major role.

9. I take the opportunity to express my gratitude, once more, to everyone who made this conference a success: my co-organizer Robert Harris, Kate Candy at the Politics Department and many others who helped with the organization, as well as all participants.
10. I am grateful to Silvia Jonas for helpful comments, and more generally for her help in putting together this volume. I also would like to thank Karin de Boer for her support, and Palgrave's reviewers and editorial team for their help and support.

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Part I

Hegel's Thought in Russia and Romania

1

The Crisis of the Beautiful Soul and the Hidden History of Russian Hegelianism

Vadim Shkolnikov

Introduction

The Hegelian craze that swept Russia during the 1830s and 1840s – Russia’s ‘age of philosophical circles’ – was part of a larger cultural proliferation: the young Hegelians of the period served as the prototype for what would later be called ‘the intelligentsia’; they played a leading role in the rise of Realism in Russian literature; and, ultimately, a number of them would become canonized as the first heroes of the Socialist revolutionary movement. For these reasons, the story of Russia’s first infatuation with Hegelian philosophy has often been retold, in bits and pieces, from a variety of perspectives. And yet, it has proven difficult to explain, to pin down, the specific, *positive* nature of Hegel’s influence.

For one thing, the heightened interest in German Idealist philosophy in Russia during the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855) has traditionally been interpreted as a product of the malaise that gripped Russian society in the aftermath of the suppressed Decembrist revolt.¹ The decisive show of force by which Nicholas crushed the rebellion would set the tone for the rest of his culturally repressive reign.² Accordingly, the widespread turn to speculative philosophy among young Russian intellectuals during the period has been explained in terms of *despondency* (a loss of all hope for opposing the autocratic regime), *escapism* (a mental flight from the ‘horrible Russian reality’), *compensation* (the need to find some kind of outlet, in the absence of more natural, more suitable spheres of activity), and *egoism* (a self-indulgent withdrawal into the world of subjectivity, at the expense of social responsibilities).³ Essentially, the flurry of philosophical activity in Russia during the 1830s and 1840s has often been reduced to nothing more than a conditioned psychological response to a stifling social environment – as if Hegelian ideas merely

served as a temporary diversion during a period of apolitical hibernation for the nation's progressive forces.

At the same time, the 'seriousness' of the philosophical activity during this period can also be questioned, for we are certainly not dealing with professional philosophers. The most influential early Russian Hegelians include: the literary critic *Vissarion Belinsky* (1811–1848), a major proponent of Realism and social consciousness in literature, who hailed the arrival of Gogol and profoundly influenced his younger contemporaries, Turgenev and Dostoevsky; *Mikhail Bakunin* (1814–1876), the future revolutionary and theorist of political anarchism, who would become a rival of Karl Marx for leadership in the International; and *Alexander Herzen* (1812–1870), a progressive writer during the 1840s, who became a Socialist leader after he emigrated from Russia in 1847, and whose brilliant and multifaceted memoirs, *My Past and Thoughts*, comprise both the culminating self-expression and the most influential interpretation of the intellectual life of the period. It was Herzen who first elevated the members of Moscow's philosophical circles to the status of significant historical figures and proclaimed that Hegel's philosophy was the 'algebra of revolution'.⁴ Yet, if we were to judge these figures purely in terms of their contribution to the *history of philosophy*, we would have to admit that their contribution was negligible. In fact, it is well known that, in the case of Belinsky, who did not read German, his knowledge of Hegel was acquired entirely from second-hand sources, primarily from the accounts of his friends. It is even more problematic, however, that virtually all the important intellectuals of the period eventually abandoned Hegelian philosophy – and, based on some accounts, it even seems as if their *rejection* of Hegel was what allowed them to attain their ultimate cultural importance.

Yet even if this first wave of Hegelian influence in Russia never resulted in any important 'original' achievements *within* the discipline of philosophy, it nevertheless deserves our attention for the unique perspective it offers on the interaction between philosophy and life. The Russian intelligentsia of the Nicholaevan period has left us a poignant record of the impact of Hegelian philosophy on the very process of identity-formation. In this sense, the most remarkable aspect of Hegel's initial influence in Russia manifested itself not simply in the transmission of a certain set of ideas, but in the emergence of a distinct type of personality or social identity. Beneath the heavily guarded political calm of Nicholas' thirty-year reign, the influx of Hegelian ideas acted as the catalyst for a complex process of personal and philosophical development.

In what follows, the social dynamics of these philosophical circles are recounted. Their application of Hegelian concepts to their own lives led the members of these circles from an intense private drama that can be called 'the crisis of the beautiful soul' to the notorious phase of 'reconciliation with reality'. The end result for Belinsky, Bakunin and Herzen, whose experience of this process is documented most vividly, was a unique historical self-consciousness, corresponding to a newfound understanding of meaningful social action – without which they could not have become historical agents, the leaders of Russia's 'liberation movement'. The encounter with Hegelian ideas thus triggered an experience of *Bildung* that proved decisive for their role in Russian history.

Stankevich and the culture of philosophical circles

As Hegel has noted, in ancient Greece philosophy was practiced 'in private, like an art'.⁵ In a sense, the same thing can be said about Nicholaevan Russia. The distinct, idiosyncratic nature of early Russian Hegelianism can be attributed to the fact that it developed not within the institutionalized, academic practice of philosophy but, rather, within the private, self-enclosed world of the philosophical circle – in which philosophy served, fundamentally, as a basis for personal relationships. Accordingly, private letters and memoirs comprise some of the most important materials for documenting how Hegelian ideas first permeated into Russian society.

Looking back with ironic humour, Herzen captures the improbable intensity and the sheer excess of youthful exuberance that reigned within the circles:

There was not a paragraph in the three parts of the *Logic*, the two [volumes] of the *Aesthetics*, the *Encyclopaedia*, and so on, which had not been the subject of desperate disputes for several nights together. People who loved each other avoided each other for weeks at a time because they disagreed about the definition of 'all-embracing spirit', or had taken as a personal insult an opinion on 'the absolute personality and its existence in itself'. Every insignificant pamphlet published in Berlin or other provincial or district towns of German philosophy was ordered and read to tatters and smudges, and the leaves fell out in a few days, if only there was a mention of Hegel in it.⁶

Most strikingly, however, the culture of the philosophical circles was initially characterized by the practice of applying newly-acquired

philosophical terminology to the analysis of everyday experiences. Recalling these first naive attempts to bring philosophy into contact with life, Herzen writes:

The man who went for a walk in Sokolniki [now a large park in Moscow] went in order to give himself up to the pantheistic feeling of his unity with the cosmos; and if on the way he happened upon some drunken soldier, or a peasant woman who got into a conversation with him, the philosopher did not simply talk to them, but sought to define the essential substance of the people in its immediate and incidental manifestation. The very tear that began to form in his eye was rigorously referred to its proper classification, to *Gemüth* or 'the tragic in the heart'.⁷

In a similar vein, Lydia Ginzburg observes that, for the young Bakunin, 'the domestic world was no less the dominion of absolute spirit than the universe itself'.⁸ On one hand, this questionable practice seems to epitomize the amateurish nature of early Russian Hegelianism. But inasmuch as 'the child is father to the man', this naive implementation of philosophical concepts was never simply abandoned: rather, it would evolve into a mature self-understanding.

The leader of the most important Hegelian circle of the 1830s remains somewhat of an enigma: commentators have long debated how Nicholas Stankevich (1813–1840), who died at age 27, without having published a single significant work, could have been the guiding ideological force within a remarkable group of young intellectuals that included Belinsky and Bakunin.⁹

In the 1830s, prior to the influence of Hegel, Russian philosophical culture was still evolving primarily as an extension of more firmly established literary and aesthetic sensibilities: German literature paved the way for German philosophy. Thus, under the influence of Schiller, Goethe, and some popularized notions from Schelling, Stankevich first brought his circle of friends together by professing the fairly widespread precepts of aesthetic humanism – the belief that beauty alone can govern and harmonize social relations – and by exalting love as the path to spiritual self-perfection and true cosmic being. Love would achieve the very essence of aesthetic humanism, an unmediated connection between beauty and moral conduct: 'He who loves acts beautifully', he wrote to his best friend Neverov.¹⁰ Among the members of the circle, these principles became the basis for an ideal of philosophical friendship – embodied in the poetic, harmonious figure

of Stankevich. In fact, this ideal entailed a distinct element of elitism, which elevated the members of the circle above 'the crowd'. And yet Stankevich always managed to project a remarkable lack of pretension, a propensity to remain equal to himself at all times, a *spontaneity* in which virtue and morality seemed a natural instinct: this is precisely how Schiller had defined a 'beautiful soul'.¹¹

Everything changed when, in the aftermath of his ill-fated engagement to Bakunin's sister Liubov – whom he realized he did not and could not love – Stankevich began to see himself as the suffering, ineffectual 'beautiful soul' of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. As an illustration of the logical pitfalls resulting from Romantic aestheticized morality, Hegel's version of the 'beautiful soul' becomes the victim of its inner moral perfection: it shrinks back from all contact with the inevitably sinful realm of practical relations, which could only tarnish its inner purity. Unable to externalize itself, unable to become anything more than potential, the beautiful soul is reduced to an abstract existence; it becomes '*wirklichkeitslos*' – devoid of reality.¹²

This conceptual framework marked the starting point for circle's first serious immersion in Hegel and the beginning of their obsession with the concept of reality. Stankevich's 'fall', as it was called, became emblematic, for all the circle's members, of their failure to live up to the elect status which they had assumed was the foundation of their friendship. Discussing Stankevich's condition with Bakunin, Belinsky acknowledged, 'We have all fallen horribly', and in the same letter he confirmed, 'The enchantment of our circle has vanished'.¹³ A new agenda was set: it became imperative to emerge from the anguish of *Schöneseeligkeit* (*прекраснодушие*, beautiful-soulness) and to rise to the 'active, concrete' life of Hegelian spirit. Stankevich led the charge: 'I now understand', Belinsky wrote, 'why Stankevich said in his letter that beautiful-soulness is the *vilest* thing in the world'.¹⁴

Essentially, the members of the circle embraced Hegel's paradigm as a compelling psychological portrait, in which each perceived a criticism of himself. By the summer of 1837, invectives against beautiful-soulness begin to appear regularly in Bakunin's correspondence, as he warns of 'a period of awful struggle...suffering...despair'.¹⁵ In fact, personal experience informs this claim: for some time Bakunin had been tormented by uncontrollable feelings of possessiveness and jealousy regarding his sisters – which contributed to his own 'fall'. Meanwhile, Belinsky even intended to compose something like a philosophical dialogue, which would dramatize an exchange between one character who embodies the beautiful soul and another who embodies spirit.¹⁶

Stankevich left Russia a few months after his 'fall' – he would die in Italy three years later – but the line of Hegelian thinking he had initiated grew even more contentious among the remaining members of the circle, with Belinsky and Bakunin now at the forefront.

The Scandal of reconciliation

The result was one of the more baffling episodes in Russian intellectual history – the so-called 'reconciliation with reality', when Belinsky (the fierce critic of social injustice) and Bakunin (the future prophet of destruction) published a series of articles in which they spoke of devotion to the Czar, the glorious life in autocratic Russia, and letting the nation's affairs follow their own course. It was precisely at this time that Herzen first met Belinsky and Bakunin, and the majority of subsequent commentators have followed Herzen in dismissing the 'reconciliation' as a kind of passing illness, which temporarily diverted Russia's progressive intellectuals from their true path.¹⁷

The fateful ideological transition was initiated when Bakunin first turned to the *Philosophy of Right* and declared that he had arisen from his fallen condition, never to fall again. Describing the intellectually exhilarating few months that followed, Belinsky wrote to Stankevich:

A new world opened up before us. Power is right, and right is power [*Сила есть право, и право есть сила*] – no, I cannot describe what I felt when I heard these words – it was a liberation. I understood the idea behind the fall of empires, the justice of conquerors, I understood that there is no such thing as brute material force, no dominion of the bayonet and the sword, no arbitrary rule, no accidents – and so my agonized guardianship of the human race came to an end, and the significance of my homeland appeared to me in a new light.¹⁸

It is clear that the remaining members of the Stankevich circle had become increasingly interested in the connection between social power and rational necessity. Moreover, Belinsky's improvised *Doppelsatz* reflects their preoccupation with Hegel's dictum on rational reality, '*Was ist vernünftig das ist wirklich, und was ist wirklich das ist vernünftig*'.¹⁹ (For Bakunin and the others this now became a kind of mantra.) The question, however, is whether the group's new ideological direction truly amounted to 'an interpretation of Hegel as a doctrine of total political quietism and unquestioning acceptance of "reality"'.²⁰

Herzen assumed this was the case, and, based on his influential account of the ensuing controversy – which first prompted him to study Hegel – one is left to wonder whether Hegel's influence actually did more harm than good for Russian intellectuals:

An exclusively speculative tendency is utterly opposed to the Russian temperament, and we shall soon see how the Russian spirit transformed Hegel's teaching and how the vitality of our nature asserted itself in spite of all those who took the tonsure of philosophical monasticism [...] The philosophical phrase which did the greatest harm was 'all that is real is rational...' Hegel's phrase wrongly understood [...] led straight to the recognition of the sovereign authorities, led to a man's sitting with folded arms, and that was just what the Berlin Buddhists wanted. However contrary such a view may be to the Russian spirit, our Moscow Hegelians were genuinely misled and accepted it. Belinsky, the most active, impulsive, and dialectically passionate, fighting nature, was at that time preaching an Indian stillness of contemplation and theoretical study instead of conflict... 'Do you know that from your point of view', I said to him, thinking to impress him with my revolutionary ultimatum, 'you can prove that the monstrous autocracy under which we live is rational and ought to exist?' 'There is no doubt about it', answered Belinsky, and proceeded to recite to me Pushkin's 'Anniversary of Borodino'. That was more than I could stand and a desperate battle raged between us... Belinsky, irritated and dissatisfied, went off to Petersburg, and from there fired off his last furious salvo at us in an article which he likewise called 'The Anniversary of Borodino'. [...] In the midst of this infighting [...] I saw the necessity and began studying Hegel in earnest... When I had grown used to Hegel's language and mastered his method, I began to perceive that he was much nearer to our viewpoint [...] The philosophy of Hegel is the algebra of revolution.²¹

While Herzen's account does not imply a categorical rejection of Hegelian ideas, only the 'vitality' of 'the Russian spirit' saved it from the plight of the 'Berlin Buddhists'. His reference to 'sitting with folded arms', however, is misleading: in the second of the aforementioned Borodino articles, Belinsky insists that 'struggle [борьба] is a condition of life',²² while Bakunin at this time affirmed that the absolute was not a place 'to seclude oneself and hide from everyday adversity'.²³ Moreover, by suggesting that he swiftly and painlessly assimilated Hegelian dialectics

to an already entrenched revolutionary agenda, Herzen glosses over his own anguished personal development during the 1840s. Ultimately, the clash with Belinsky changed Herzen as much as vice versa: his first serious confrontation with Hegel and the thematics of 'reconciliation' marked the critical turning-point that would eventually transform his hazy youthful rebelliousness into a theoretically-grounded revolutionary ideology. At the time, however, having just met Belinsky and Bakunin, Herzen could not have understood that the 'reconciliation' remained an acute form of the crisis of friendship that had begun with Stankevich's 'fall' and that was now leading the circle to its demise.

The original impetus for the doctrine of 'reconciliation with reality' can be deduced from an odd little article by Bakunin: his introduction to his own translation of Hegel's 'Gymnasium Lectures', published in *The Moscow Observer* in the spring of 1838. In fact, Bakunin's introduction bears minimal relation to the actual topic of Hegel's lectures: instead, it opens as an attempt to vindicate Hegelian philosophy in the opinion of a mistrustful reading public. Clearly echoing Hegel's preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Bakunin argues that what the 'real Russian person' rightfully condemns and resists is actually just boisterous, self-aggrandizing babble that merely poses as philosophy²⁴ but is, moreover, a product of the spiritual crisis that characterizes the age, the alienation of the thinking subject from reality: 'Yes, noise, idle chatter – this is the only result of the terrible, senseless anarchy of minds that constitutes the main affliction of our new generation, abstract, illusory, estranged from all reality'.²⁵ Bakunin proceeds to outline how the historical development of modern European culture led to this alienation of the *I* from reality – until finally Hegel, proclaiming that 'What is real is rational, and what is rational is real [sic]', rediscovered the path back to wholeness and the absolute. And so, Bakunin concludes, 'The reconciliation with reality in every respect and in all spheres of life is the great task of our age'.²⁶

First of all, it is worth noting that Bakunin actually reverses the order of Hegel's *Doppelsatz*. Hegel begins, '*Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich...*' – because he is most concerned with defining the nature of *Vernunft* and defending its central place in philosophy, in opposition to Kant, Jacobi and so on. By contrast, Bakunin and company invariably start with 'What is real is rational...', and they often omit the second half (as Herzen does in *My Past and Thoughts*) – because they are most concerned with defining the nature of reality. Reality needs to be defined philosophically, because it is not equivalent to the empirically self-evident. Thus, it should not be assumed that Bakunin's primary

objective is to justify the present state of things (whatever it might be) as rational. Rather, it was essential to understand reality as an antidote for the abstractness and 'lack of reality' that define the beautiful soul: Bakunin and his friends were still seeking a way to emerge from the morass of beautiful-soulness.

This becomes more clear if we consider that, prior to his immersion in Hegel, Bakunin first asserted his philosophical voice as the apostle of Fichte's notion of 'blessedness' or 'bliss', derived from *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (*The Way towards the Blessed Life*)²⁷. As he ceaselessly explained to his disciples, 'The truth is so powerful, that there is no evil that it cannot remedy; there is no misfortune that it could not turn into absolute bliss'.²⁸ Unfortunately, his own psychological torment, brought on by the crisis of beautiful-soulness, proved disastrous for this premise. In turn, Bakunin's earliest impressions of Hegel (recorded in 'My Notes') reflect his preoccupation with salvaging the doctrine of bliss, as he simply grafted the Hegelian concept of spirit onto his previous Fichtean fixation: 'Spirit is absolute knowing, absolute freedom, absolute love, and consequently absolute bliss'.²⁹

Essentially, in his call for 'reconciliation', Bakunin never ceased to preach 'the way towards a blessed life'. Hegel's notion of the education of consciousness through suffering and 'the way of despair'³⁰ allowed Bakunin to tout his own recent experience of suffering as a self-righteous example to his still-struggling friends:

Truth is not obtained for nothing [*даром*]; no, it is the product of terrible suffering, prolonged tormenting aspiration. Yes, suffering is good: it is a cleansing flame, that transforms the soul and gives it firmness; suffering is education [*воспитание*].³¹

In particular, this argument was directed towards Belinsky, who was perpetually tormented by financial debts, his professional future, and his unrequited love for Bakunin's sister, Alexandra. For Bakunin, Belinsky's inability to understand that the pain he felt was an unavoidable symptom of the stage of reflection and division (*распадение*) – a necessary stage (but only a stage) in the dialectical development of spirit – demonstrated that he was still afflicted with beautiful-soulness. From this perspective, the 'reconciliation' has little connection to the allegedly conservative theory of the state articulated in the *Philosophy of Right*. Instead, Bakunin and his friends remain preoccupied with the reconciliation that is the continuous goal of consciousness throughout the *Phenomenology*. The doctrine of rational reality is

understood from the perspective of subjective spirit and its striving for self-realization.

In fact, Bakunin's chapter, specifically his overview of modern European cultural history, comprises his own improvised, albeit oversimplified version of the *Phenomenology*. Bakunin does not actually follow Hegel's interpretation of events such as the Reformation or the French Revolution, but these events, together with developments in philosophy and literature, are viewed as part of the ongoing struggle of modern consciousness to overcome its self-alienation. Or, more simply: all modern European history is conceptualized as the striving to overcome the pitfall of beautiful-soulness. By conflating the personal history of his group of friends with the history of Europe, Bakunin initiates a crucial line of thinking for the subsequent development of Russian Hegelianism.

At the same time, there is a conspicuous lack of evidence to suggest that Bakunin or the others had even begun to consider the political implications of these ideas. Bakunin's gaze remains fixated on the world of the philosophical circle and the continuation of personal polemics. Belinsky confirms this when he later explains that the chapter failed to connect with the public not because its basic ideas were misguided (Belinsky could not resist their influence) but because Bakunin expressed his arguments 'sweepingly, boastfully, impudently, as in a circle of his friends, wearing his robe and with a pipe in his mouth'.³² Significantly, Bakunin's distinct take on beautiful-soulness – the beautiful soul does not comprehend that 'the world of Reality is higher [выше]' than its 'helpless [бессильной, powerless], pathetic individuality' – establishes the need for an identity grounded on something more powerful than mere individuality.³³ But, in practice, Bakunin had not taken any steps to construct this new identity. For him the doctrine of reconciliation merely articulated a new standard for membership in the philosophical circle, designed to return the circle to its former aspirations and its former 'bliss'.

By contrast, Belinsky would invoke virtually the same Hegelian framework – which he had learned from Bakunin – as a bludgeon against the life of the philosophical circle. Over the course of a remarkable polemical correspondence with Bakunin, Belinsky's quest to comprehend reality became an obsession: 'The word reality', he would proclaim, 'has taken on the same meaning for me as the word God'.³⁴ Yet Belinsky's epistolary 'dissertations' on reality never ceased to be an inquiry into the nature of friendship, an attempt to come to terms with his love/hate relationship with Bakunin. Although Belinsky would continue to revere Bakunin the

philosopher, Bakunin's ineptitude in personal relationships came to epitomize for Belinsky the self-enclosed abstractness of the dreaded beautiful soul. Moreover, Bakunin's failure as a friend exposed the fundamental falseness of philosophical friendship – a misguided attempt to combine analytical reason with what should always remain spontaneous, irrational feeling. Thus, Belinsky's 'reconciliation' was driven fundamentally by his break with the once-beloved circle: 'I'm sick of the beautiful soul's circling around in empty circles [*прекраснодушное кружение в пустых кругах*] of false relations, false friendships, false love, and false hatred'.³⁵

From abstract heroism to self-realization

For Belinsky, the 'reconciliation with reality' essentially culminated in self-transformation – and the repercussions would extend to the emerging oppositional intelligentsia as a whole. Ultimately, this phase proved to be an indispensable moment of self-criticism, which brought an end to the intelligentsia's existence as merely 'abstract heroes'. In this sense, the Hegelian framework that first took shape amidst the private dramas of Stankevich and his friends effected a decisive shift in what would later emerge as active political opposition.

Already at the height of his conflict with Bakunin, Belinsky was seeking to replace his now-fading sense of self as a member of the philosophical circle. He plunged into practical professional activity: working as a teacher of composition, while making plans for a more secure journalistic future in Petersburg. For Bakunin, this concern with the 'finite' was the epitome of fallenness, but Belinsky responded in anger:

I am no longer a candidate for membership in society, but a member; I feel myself within society and I feel society within me, I have grafted myself to its interests, I have penetrated into its existence, I have poured my life into its life, I have given my own self to it in tribute.³⁶

Significantly, this real-life experience – and not some need to escape 'Russian reality' – helps to account for Belinsky's subsequent arguments on social power and rational necessity.

At the same time, the beginnings of a new self-understanding may be observed in Belinsky's long chapter on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, written around the same time as Bakunin's introduction to the 'Gymnasium Lectures'. The chapter was inspired by a series of performances of

Hamlet in Moscow in 1837, with Pavel Mochalov in the lead role, and Belinsky's 'organicist' method of analysis represents an important innovation in the history of Russian literary criticism. In Hegelian terms, however, Belinsky's reading of Shakespeare's drama can be summarized quite simply: Hamlet is a beautiful soul, stuck in the stage of reflection and division (*распадение*). In fact, Belinsky's subsequent emphasis on Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia as a manifestation of his 'fall' suggests that he was still contemplating Stankevich and Liubov Bakunina. Nevertheless, Belinsky was not simply projecting his own *idée fixe* onto Shakespeare's drama. At the beginning of the chapter, he explains that the play itself is not his real focus, nor even Mochalov's acting, to which he devotes considerable attention; rather, the real focus of the chapter is the Russian public.³⁷ For Belinsky, who had made his debut as a literary critic with the audacious claim that Russia had no literature, the genuine enthusiasm with which the Moscow public responded to the performance of *Hamlet* offered a new hope: Russia could one day have a literature. Thus, Belinsky endeavoured to perceive the point where his own development, his own struggle to enter into the life of spirit, merged with the spiritual development of Russian culture as a whole: as if the moment when he himself felt ready to transcend the self-enclosed suffering of the beautiful soul would simultaneously mark the moment when Russia could finally overcome centuries of cultural isolation, its alleged existence outside the historical development of the West. Bakunin too had attempted to project personal history onto the history of European culture. But Bakunin was not yet thinking about making an impact on cultural history.

Standing ovations for Mochalov, however, offered flimsy evidence of Russia's impending entry into World History. Instead, Belinsky found a more suitable subject matter to develop this line of analysis when, in 1839, a new monument was erected to commemorate the battle of Borodino, which had led to the defeat of Napoleon in 1812. Belinsky's two articles inspired by the Borodino anniversary provoked outrage from Herzen and others, who only saw a defence of the rational necessity of autocracy in Russia. This premise, however, was a by-product of Belinsky's primary agenda: a theoretical analysis of Russia's biggest moment on the global stage – as a prelude to the nation's rise to full-fledged World-Historical status. The first chapter begins: 'Nothing broadens the human spirit, nothing allows it to take flight with mighty eagle's wings into [...] the kingdom of the infinite, like the contemplation of life's World-Historical events'.³⁸ The Marxist theorist Georgi Plekhanov stands out as the one commentator who recognized that Belinsky's thinking marked a critical,

positive contribution to the development of revolutionary ideology: 'For us it is important that Belinsky arrived at the doctrine of reconciliation with *Russian reality* by way of *an analysis of Russia's historical development*, albeit an inaccurate and highly superficial analysis'.³⁹ For Plekhanov this was the first logical step towards the 'scientificity' that would separate Marxism from 'idealistic' socialism.

At the same time, it is also significant that Belinsky's shift to a Hegelian analysis of Russia's historical development simultaneously served his personal striving towards self-realization. Endeavouring to overcome his own abstractness and ephemerality, the individual turns to a rigorous, philosophical understanding of the historical dynamics of social power. As Belinsky wrote to Stankevich: 'It was a liberation [...] and the significance of my homeland appeared to me in a new light'. Essentially, this new philosophical perspective on history led to a new perspective on the individual self, as Belinsky adopted a highly critical attitude towards his own former journalism, his former arrogance, and his former self-certainty. That is, Belinsky now condemned his former 'abstract heroism': a vague ethos of protest armed with nothing more than abstract ideal of society, torn away from the conditions of historical development; an abstract love for humanity, devoid of determinate content.⁴⁰ Schiller's early dramas (including *The Robbers* and *Intrigue and Love*, which Belinsky had once admired), as well as Bakunin's continued interference into the lives of his family members (his well-known campaign to 'liberate' his sister Varvara from her marriage), were also the prime targets of his invectives against 'abstract heroism'. This criticism, however, is even more relevant with regard to Herzen.

According to another account of the 'reconciliation' controversy, Herzen responded incredulously, as if to an obvious error, a 'monstrous form of self-annihilation', when Belinsky declared: 'Look, friend, [...] it's time we curbed our meager and upstart little minds and admitted to ourselves that they always will be nothing but rubbish in the face of events where nations and their leaders, and the history that they embody, play the role'.⁴¹ But this was precisely what the emerging oppositional intelligentsia needed to hear. Their future role would depend on this moment of self-negation.

Essentially, in *My Past and Thoughts* Herzen attempts to demonstrate the continuity of his revolutionary aspirations – from the oath he and his life-long associate Nicholas Ogarev (1813–1877) swore as teenagers on Moscow's Sparrow Hills to his formulation of Russian Socialism in the early 1850s and the founding of the Free Russian Press in London

in 1853. But in the late 1830s, when the Stankevich circle was struggling with Hegel, Herzen was still content merely to write about the liberation of humanity in love-letters to his future wife Natalia Zakharina. At the time of his clash with Belinsky, Herzen admitted to Ogarev: 'How many times [...] you and I vacillated between mysticism and philosophy, between an artistic, scholarly, political, and I don't know what kind of calling'.⁴² (And a few lines later: 'I am going to study Hegel'.)

In turn, Herzen's letters and diaries from the 1840s reveal that the criticism levelled by Belinsky would continue to haunt him for years. At the height of his immersion in Hegel, Herzen, much like the Young Hegelians in Germany, shifted towards a 'philosophy of action', which he proclaimed in a series of articles entitled 'Dilettantism in Science' (by 'science' he meant Hegelian philosophy). Yet, privately, during the same period Herzen acknowledged his helpless, abstract condition as an intellectual: 'Our situation is hopeless [*безвыходно*], because it is false, because the logic of history shows that we stand outside the needs of the people [*мы вне народных потребностей*]...to live for an abstract idea of self-sacrifice is unnatural'.⁴³ Struggling against this 'abstractness', Herzen, who never used the term 'beautiful soul' as Belinsky and Bakunin did, still displayed the tell-tale symptoms (torment, weakness, reflection, inability to externalize...).

My God, what unbearably difficult hours of sorrow eat away at me! Is it weakness? Or the consequence of the development of my soul, or [...] the image of the surrounding world reflected in me? [...] I need to manifest myself [*Я должен обнаруживаться*, more literally: 'I need to externalize myself']'.⁴⁴

In turn, the entire 'Dilettantism in Science' series – which opens with the premise that 'the universal reconciliation within the sphere of thought has been proclaimed to the world by science' – remained a meditation on the themes that had preoccupied the Stankevich circle.⁴⁵ Arguably, Herzen did not achieve complete 'reconciliation' until the writing of *My Past and Thoughts*, a work he described as 'the reflection of history in an individual who accidentally got in its path'.⁴⁶ Despite the irony and self-effacing humour of this formulation, it finally opened the door to historical agency and meaningful political action, as the leader of the growing socialist movement: 'Let *My Past and Thoughts* settle my account with personal life [...] My remaining thoughts – for action, my remaining strength – for battle'.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Thus, for Herzen, as for Belinsky and Bakunin, Hegelian 'reconciliation' did not merely entail a set of temporarily-held beliefs, but a tortuous analytical process each had to undergo in his personal development. What began as 'the crisis of the beautiful soul' – undermining the foundations of the progressive intellectual's sense of self – would ultimately lead, through a Hegelian progression of thought, to the emergence of a new kind of socio-historical identity and, with it, a new concept of social activism. In each case 'reconciliation' entailed the overcoming of 'abstractness' and a 'lack of content' by associating oneself with, understanding one's relationship to, the rational necessity that underlies historical development.

For Belinsky, this understanding, encapsulated in his notion of *социальность* (literally 'sociality'), allowed him to establish an organic connection between the development of Russian literature and the development of Russian society (exactly what he had said was missing when he first claimed that Russia had no literature). In case of Bakunin, who finally began to heed Belinsky's criticism before leaving Russia in 1840, a historically-grounded analysis of the current state of the 'Democratic' movement, articulated in 'The Reaction in Germany' (1842) would allow him to take the first step from revolutionary ideas to revolutionary action. As a publicist and a revolutionary, Herzen continued the work of both Belinsky and Bakunin, but perhaps his most significant achievement was projecting his own personal development and that of his friends as 'the spirit of the age'. Although, by the time he wrote *My Past and Thoughts*, Herzen rarely used Hegelian terminology, his most important work also demonstrates that the Russian intelligentsia had finally grasped Hegel's central premise: that truth, the absolute, in its historical development, can only be understood as subject.

Notes

1. On 14 December 1825, as Nicholas was about to ascend to the throne, a group of young aristocratic officers attempted a military coup, in the hope of forcing the autocrat to accept a constitution.
2. As Alexander Herzen would recall: 'We have spoken many times about the stagnation after the rupture of 1825. The moral level of society fell, development was cut short, everything progressive, energetic, was eliminated ['crossed out'] from life [...] The suppression of all other spheres of human activity threw the educated portion of society into a bookish world', *Byloe i dumy* [*My Past and Thoughts*], in Herzen (1954–1965), 9, 31. Here, and in what follows, all translations are my own.

3. Describing the 'period in Russian intellectual history which deserves to be called the "philosophical epoch"', Andrzej Walicki writes: 'It was the epoch when the progressive intelligentsia, bitterly disappointed by the failure of the Decembrist uprising, lost faith in the efficacy of political action [...] In Russia, as in Germany, philosophical speculation had a compensatory function for men of intellectual vigor living in a society where public life was almost totally paralyzed' (Walicki 1979, 115–116). Meanwhile, in the words of historian Bruce Lincoln: 'For young men who found the Russia of Nicholas spiritually deadening, but were forced to live in the alien world which it had created, such a glorification of the ego, of the self, in an internalized world free from all political and service demands, offered an ideal means of escape [...] It provided [...] a justification, even glorification, of their retreat from the real world into an ideal world from which all distasteful and oppressive reality could be banished by philosophical construct' (Lincoln 1989, 258).
4. Herzen (1982), 237. On Herzen see also Harris (in this volume).
5. PR, Introduction, 7.
6. Herzen (1982), 232.
7. Herzen (1982), 234.
8. Ginzburg (1991), 42.
9. At the time, Herzen belonged to a rival circle. But, as we see, ideas first conceived within the Stankevich circle would also profoundly influence his development.
10. Stankevich (1890), 149.
11. In his essay 'On Grace and Dignity', Schiller had written, 'It is in a beautiful soul... that sensuality and reason, duty and inclination, are harmonized' (quoted in Norton 1995, 241), and as Robert Norton, explains, this notion of the beautiful soul entailed 'a state in which virtue had become so ingrained that goodness was realized with such effortless facility that it seemed to be a natural instinct' (Norton 1995, 243).
12. PS, 406.
13. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 160, 163.
14. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 200.
15. Bakunin (1934), 2, 64.
16. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 188–189.
17. Herzen (1954–1965), 9, 27. Annenkov writes in the same vein: 'By the fall of 1840 Belinsky recovered from his intoxication with a trend of thought which threatened to end his career at its very beginning' (Annenkov 1989, 130).
18. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 386–387. It should be noted that this enormous letter to Stankevich was written almost two years after the period described here. This passage does not, therefore, reflect Belinsky's immediate impressions of the *Philosophy of Right*, but his retroactive interpretation of his own philosophical development.
19. PR, Preface, 10.
20. Frank (1976), 120.
21. Herzen (1982), 232, 235–236.
22. Belinsky (1953–1959), 3, 341.
23. Bakunin (1934), 2, 69.

24. 'At the present time, the pettifoggery of caprice has usurped the name of philosophy and succeeded in giving the wide public the opinion that such triflings are philosophy', PR, Introduction, 7.
25. Bakunin (1934), 2, 167.
26. Bakunin (1934), 2, 177.
27. Fichte (2001) [1806].
28. Bakunin (1934), 1, 227.
29. Bakunin (1934), 2, 70.
30. PS, 49 (#78).
31. Bakunin (1934), 2:169.
32. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 385.
33. Bakunin (1934), 2, 167.
34. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 387.
35. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 368.
36. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 316.
37. Belinsky (1953–1959), 2, 254.
38. Belinsky (1953–1959), 3, 240–241.
39. Plekhanov (1956–1958), 4, 437.
40. Belinsky (1953–1959), 11, 385.
41. Annenkov (1989), 129–130.
42. Herzen (1954–1965), 22, 53.
43. Herzen (1954–1965), 2, 278.
44. Herzen (1954–1965), 2, 204.
45. Herzen (1954–1965), 3, 7.
46. Herzen (1954–1965), 10, 9.
47. Herzen (1954–1965), 8, 12.

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2

Granovsky, Herzen and Chicherin: Hegel and the Battle for Russia's Soul

Robert Harris

Introduction

In the watershed year of 1855, with the accession of Alexander II in the midst of a humiliating defeat in the Crimean war, discussion turned to the possibility of change and reform in Russia. Alexander Herzen (1812–1870), the most celebrated Russian social thinker of his era, and Boris Chicherin (1828–1904), the preeminent legal scholar of his day, had both absorbed Hegel under the influence and tutelage of Timofei Granovsky (1813–1855), professor of history at Moscow University from 1839 to 1855, and the major torchbearer of Hegelian thought in Russia. Although Herzen and Chicherin shared common cause on a number of issues – Herzen even published several of Chicherin's essays – the two broke strongly and publically over events culminating in tsarist repression of student activities in the early 1860s.

This chapter considers the refraction of Hegelian doctrine in Russia in the context of the mid-nineteenth century battle over the authority of the Russian state and the soul of the Russian nation. It examines how Hegelian texts and concepts, in particular what came to be known as the *Rechtsstaat*, were understood and interpreted so differently by students who imbibed their knowledge from the same well. How was it that Hegel was received with such divergent understandings, yet with such force and impact, by students of the same teacher, and even more divergently by ideological movements in the following decades? After outlining Granovsky's absorption of Hegelian thought, as well as his incorporation of the teachings of Gans and Ranke, and recounting Herzen's early encounters with Hegelian texts, this chapter focuses on the Herzen-Chicherin debate of the 1860s. These two leading Hegelians appeared to share many of the same Hegelian foundations, yet in practice their views

clashed, and this became clear in their reaction to the student protests and the ensuing government repression. Thus, the chapter argues that the disagreement, which can be seen as revolving around the Hegelian notion of 'conscience', can partly be explained by the *ad hoc* fashion in which Hegel's thought was taken up by the thinkers under consideration. Moreover, Hegel's writings on the French Revolution may offer a clue to Herzen's more liberal understanding of Hegelian political thinking: in contrast to Chicherin's conservative reading, he understood it as 'the algebra of revolution' decades before a revolution with a Hegelian pedigree would sweep across Russia.

Granovsky: A Hegelian in Berlin and Moscow

Hegel's bold new ideas entered Russia with explosive force, unmediated by the rich and varied intellectual, social and political environments from which they emerged. Russia profoundly lacked the educational traditions and interpretive mechanisms required to absorb and temper these ideas. When in 1801, Hegel arrived at Jena to lecture, Russia, which had a population of some 35 million, still had only one university. As Hegel was approaching the close of a career that brilliantly harnessed the heritage of classical erudition and reworked the great traditions of Western philosophy, a small cadre of Russian thinkers rose to painful consciousness of the fact that they had somehow been left out of the great stream of European thought as it had evolved over the centuries.¹ In 1826, Nicholas I banned the teaching of philosophy, and for decades to come, the locus of philosophical enquiry was situated in *kruzhki*, or informal study circles. During the early 1830s, the Russian intelligentsia emerged, largely as a self-taught, independent cohort of motivated and engaged thinkers.

Nikolai Stankevich (1813–1840) arrived as a university student in Moscow in the summer of 1830, and by the following year he had formed his storied Hegelian study circle.² In this regard, Hegelian philosophy holds the honour of being the central object of study in one of the first and most famous study circles (*kruzhki*) of Russia's first generation of intelligentsia. Timofei Granovsky, a young law student still uncertain of his path in life, befriended Stankevich, who encouraged him to study Hegel at its source. By autumn 1837, Neverov (another member of the circle) and Stankevich joined Granovsky in Berlin, and Russia's three pioneering Hegelians were gathered in the city of their dreams, not far from the university that would become their shrine. Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) and Ivan Turgenev (1818–1883) also went to Berlin, and

the latter quipped that as the Slavs had in ancient times once searched for their chieftains from foreign warlords (Viking Varangians), young Russians of his time sought 'the font of true knowledge' (*istochnik nastoiashchego znaniia*), the key to history, to life's order and meaning, by plunging headlong into the depths of the 'German sea'.³ Berlin, the 'Athens on the Spree', where Hegel had arrived in 1818 to electrify the university with his lectures, had become a great mecca for a select few Russians with an interest in philosophy who had gained permission and funding to study abroad.

As most Russian Hegelians, Granovsky never had the privilege of hearing Hegel in person.⁴ Nonetheless, he did frequent the lectures of Eduard Gans (1797–1839), the Hegelian legal historian who was inclined toward an a priori or deductive approach to philosophical truth, a universal understanding that governs and conditions the explanation of ultimate reality.⁵ Gans was far from a strict propagator of pure Hegelian teaching, but rather blended it with liberal, democratic French models, including the utopian socialist thought of Saint-Simon.⁶

A counterbalance to Gans' speculative outlook was provided by Leopold von Ranke, one of the founders of modern historiographic *Wissenschaft*. Ranke favoured an inductive, ad hoc, and often romanticist approach, arguing that history must be understood from the particular, from the study of organic individual and national phenomena. The Hegel/Ranke contrast would continue to engage scholarship for decades to come.⁷

Caught in the maelstrom at the very heart of the German academy, Granovsky does not appear to have regarded the philosophical and historicist methods as discrete, independent and competing currents, but endeavoured to harmonize the two approaches. History was seen to reveal philosophical truth, and both only served to confirm religious faith. What Granovsky took back to Russia was not the *reine Theorie* of pure philosophy, nor the cool distance of the professional historian, but a syncretistic mix of the two, where the borders of neither discipline were strictly respected. This is not because of any intellectual weakness on Granovsky's part, but rather because these were still early days for the historical method. Indeed, this attempt at a synthesis was not unique to Granovsky. Ranke maintained that there was a basic unity, continuity and development in history, even if only God was capable of grasping it while mere mortals often perceived only arbitrariness and contradiction in world events.⁸ He interlaced his historical understanding with philosophical and religious constructs, notions of continuous development, of perfectibility, of divine plans and higher goals.

Although Granovsky's education was not systematic but piece-meal, gleaned in a three-year stint in Berlin, he was soon acknowledged as one of Russia's most qualified Hegelians. Upon his return he assumed a coveted teaching position at Moscow University. In his dissemination of Hegelian thought to Russia's next generation of writers, academics and leaders, Granovsky freely chose and adopted those aspects of the Berlin lectures that meshed with his intuitive judgements and that could be applied to his understanding of Russia and its history. He combined his belief in a purposeful, providential God with a similar understanding of Hegel's notion of history as the purposeful and progressive teleology of *Weltgeist*. Religion, critical historical study and philosophical truth were all interwoven. Hegel's underlying supposition of a certain regularity of events was absorbed side-by-side with the budding emergence of a historicist approach which rejects such regularity. Most relevant to our interests in this study, Granovsky, while frequently portrayed as a moderate or liberal, also adopted Hegel's strong deferential attitude to civic authorities and the state.

Granovsky was also attracted to the romantic notion of *Volksggeist*, which he saw as indispensable for a Russia that was searching for its own particular identity, its unique place in the world and sense of purpose and mission.⁹ Clearly, these concepts did not sit well with one another. While Hegel had little to say about the importance of the common, uneducated masses in defining German culture, Russia was just beginning to idealize its *narod*, the simple peasantry which, it was claimed, embodied the very essence of Russianness.

If Granovsky's teachings were compromised by his subjective, eclectic approach, how much more so for an entire generation of elite, educated Russians who imbibed Hegelian thought through the prism of his interpretation during the sixteen-year period in which he was the main carrier and interpreter of Hegel in Russia.

Herzen: the turn to Hegel in internal exile

Alexander Herzen was of the same generation as Stankevich and Granovsky. The three were only one year apart in age, and all were in their first years of university as Hegel entered his last year of his life. Prior to 1838, we find only one reference to Hegel, not particularly complimentary, in Herzen's correspondence. In 1833, Herzen writes that while Schelling ended his career in mystical Catholicism, Hegel turned to despotism; Fichte, in contrast to Hegel, 'understood well the dignity of man'.¹⁰ We do not know what Herzen had read to prompt these remarks,

but it appears that he perceives Hegel as granting wide authority to any incumbent governing power, even to a tyrant, while allowing such a ruler to ride roughshod over the rights of the individual.

Herzen hardly had a chance to become grounded in Hegelian philosophy during the 1830s, as the police arrested him for a minor incident and he spent much of the decade in internal exile. In November of 1838, while still interned in the provinces, Herzen writes that he has been reading Hegel and finds it very consoling, even theological at times, although three months later he complains of Hegel's 'doubtless inalterability' in the realm of the ideal, which has been subordinated to strict formulae. Objections notwithstanding, by the end of the month Herzen requests that he be sent books of history and Hegel, as if he were trying to read in the depths of exile what Granovsky had been exposed to in Berlin.¹¹

Upon his return to Moscow in the summer of 1839, Herzen plunged into what soon became a celebrated polemic with Belinsky and Bakunin, the vanguard of Russia's young intelligentsia, over what appeared to be a particular, quietist interpretation of Hegel, one which centred around the notion of 'reconciliation with reality' (*Versöhnung mit der Wirklichkeit*).¹² Herzen immersed himself in the great philosopher and locked horns with the members of the study circle of Nikolai Stankevich. Years later, Herzen would chide Stankevich as 'one of the *idle* people who accomplished *nothing*, the first disciple of Hegel in the circle of Moscow youth'. In his view, the study of Hegel produces armchair critics, sedentary philosophers, reconciled to the current state of affairs, not interested in action. Referring to the Hegelian Stankevich circle, Herzen writes: 'They disliked our almost exclusively political direction, and we disliked their almost entirely speculative (*umozritel'noe*) direction. They considered us Frondeurs and French, we considered them sentimentalists and German'.¹³

Right and left interpretation of Hegel in the 1860s

Let us now leap forward by nearly two decades. Much had transpired during these years. Herzen was again internally exiled before leaving Russia for good in early 1847; Tsar Nicholas I died in March 1855, and Granovsky passed on seven months later. This intervening period, stretching from the late 1840s to the mid-1850s, was marked by severe reaction and repression. The best of Russia's thinkers had pored over Hegel's dense tomes, but very little productive thought was allowed to surface. Granovsky himself refrained from publishing his lectures, lest the tsarist censor identify 'dangerous' teaching in the subject matter, or

find 'subversive' material between the lines. Thus, the direct link with Hegelian doctrine as it was taught in Berlin in the 1830s was passed on in Russia primarily through Granovsky's students, not his writings. The line from Hegel to Russian Hegelians was now at least four stages removed from the source.

In April 1855, the accession of Alexander II offered new hope for Russia's exiles and liberals. Herzen, having migrated from France to England in the summer of 1852, took a cue from the changing of the guard. This, he thought, was a time when Russia might be able to move forward. Looking for a cohort in Russia, Herzen took interest in the essays of Granovsky's outstanding protégé, Boris Chicherin. Chicherin graduated in 1849 in the midst of the darkest years of the rule of Nicholas I. Teaching law in Moscow, he and his colleague Konstantin Kavelin (1818–1885) authored a series of essays, considered to be jewels of mid-nineteenth century Russian liberal thought. Herzen published these in the London press that he had founded, in a series entitled 'Voices from Russia'.¹⁴

Russia's Hegelians were finally able to appear in an uncensored publication, and it seemed, quite literally, that they were all more or less on the same page. Chicherin argued for the end of serfdom and suggested that extensive aristocratic hierarchies were not consonant with modern states. During the same years, Herzen was engaged in a literary campaign to convince Russia's ruling elite that the serfs must be emancipated and the social order changed. It seemed that the voices of reason, heard in the Hegelian-inspired 'Voices from Russia', spoke as one.

However, sharing the same Hegelian proof texts in theory does not guarantee a shared attitude in practice. This can be seen from the reaction of Russia's Hegelians to a series of student protests, which had begun in 1857. Reacting to these disturbances, the education ministry imposed taxes and raised fees to discourage poorer applicants, who, it was maintained, were prone to radicalization and constituted the source of the troubles. More demonstrations ensued, followed by suppression, arrests, restrictions on student gatherings, faculty resignations, and finally government closure of universities during part of the 1861–1862 academic year.¹⁵

Herzen recognized that the new generation was no longer content to sit and ponder, and that the university campus on which Hegelian thought had developed in the previous decades had now become the battleground to determine the future of Russia: 'Russian civic [socio-political] thought has been bred in the universities'.¹⁶ Moreover,

he regarded the protests as a sign of Russia's entry onto the stage of world history. The events were the product of historical logic working its way on Russian soil. 'The university incident is not a coincidence, not chance occurrence, but the beginning of an unavoidable struggle. This struggle, which must occur somewhere, has appeared on the most natural soil'.¹⁷

Herzen understood that the Hegelian dialectic required critical thought and a raising of consciousness: 'Word, counsel, analysis, exposure, and theory'. However, this was not enough; it was only first part of the procedure. He viewed the Hegelian dialectic as carrying the potential for social change. Theory must be followed by active engagement with the world to complete the historical process: 'Formation of circles, the establishment of pathways [means], and internal and external relations'.¹⁸

In the words of one important study, Chicherin was a leading representative of 'early Russian liberalism'.¹⁹ Yet his reaction to the student rallies of autumn 1861 could hardly have been further from that of Herzen. He pushed for the abrogation of students' rights to public assembly and publishing, as well as an increase of police powers, backing the use of draconian measures to oppose any sign of public demonstration in the student body. Despite the profound influence of Hegel on both thinkers, there was a great gap between the conception of Chicherin's notion of state authority and the need for public order and Herzen's brand of liberal humanism, in which individual rights were valued over the conservative apparatus of state systems. Yet Chicherin's position appears to be a bit of an enigma if we note that five years after the above events, Chicherin wrote a defence of liberty of thought: 'Freedom of conscience is the best of modern humanity's achievements'.²⁰

This seems to accord well with the importance Hegel assigns to *Gewissen*, conscience. However, more important than Chicherin's seemingly broad-minded declaration are his open-ended qualifications on the subject:

[T]here are limitations necessary for the safeguarding of moral order in society. The forcing of conscience must always be considered an abuse of power, but limitations on the external expression and in particular on the dissemination of religion can often be justified. [...] A religion that is incompatible with the existing foundations of society cannot be tolerated in the state. Its practitioners must leave the society to which they do not want to submit, and a doctrine which is seen as leading people to commit misdeeds should be eliminated [*dolzhna byt' ustranena*].²¹

Chicherin presents the final clause as a 'qualification' to freedom of conscience. Others might view this as a blatant repudiation of the concept. The entire passage is open to interpretation, as it deals with the government's 'unquestionable right' to punish offenders acting in the name of religion and to challenge what it considers to be noxious doctrines that lead to criminal acts. In part, it depends on how Chicherin (or the state) defines doctrines that are 'incompatible' with those of society, and what he considers to constitute 'criminal'. Chicherin's terminology, at least in this passage, is so open-ended that could be interpreted as eminently reasonable (for example, the state should act to eliminate doctrines which advocate racism or violence), or an insidious document which gives license to the authorities to clamp down on anything it considers in violation of the law, or merely the conventions of society. The real significance of such passages is determined by how a term is defined and implemented, not by the bald term itself. Nevertheless, the general gist of the passage is clear. The state should be accorded broad powers, extending even to the right to the extermination of incompatible doctrines.

The ambiguities of Hegel's political philosophy

How, then, did one of Russia's leading jurisprudential lights see fit to assume such seemingly discordant, if not outright contradictory positions, all within what he considered to be a rational Hegelian framework? I suggest that part of the discrepancy emerges from the lack of strong academic tradition and of specific philosophical training that I outline in the introduction to this chapter. This resulted in a rather ad hoc approach to philosophical texts, on the part of all the thinkers we have mentioned. Individuals could focus on particular passages or sections in relative isolation, removed from the context of the larger corpus of work, and from the professional methodology required to read such difficult texts. Russian thinkers of this period were quite eclectic, taking what they found to be useful, and discarding or ignoring other texts. In addition, we should stress the inherent difficulty for Russian native speakers in attempting to fathom Hegel's complex and recondite language.

As noted, Chicherin often takes his cues on political theory from Hegel. Yet there is some uncertainty on what precisely Hegel understands the optimal structure or governance to be. At the heart of this debate, now close to two centuries old and still running, is the interpretation of Hegel's concept of the state, civil order, social change,

and of the role of the individual, particularly individual conscience, within the state.

Hegel's notion of conscience involves a degree of ambivalence or ambiguity, and there is tension between personal conscience, which is subjective, and the qualitatively superior manifestation of conscience, aligning with the true and the good, which, ultimately, is embodied in the state. In Hegel's discussion of personal freedom, he asserts that the state cannot recognize conscience in its peculiar or individuated form.²² Like so many of Hegel's dicta, this can be read in a number of ways. It appears that Hegel simply wishes to note that individual judgement is subjective and imperfect. The ideal state, based on reason and principle, takes precedence over its individual subjects. In another passage, Hegel suggests that the highest form of consciousness, and thus real freedom, is represented in the workings of the ideal state, which is the 'actuality of concrete freedom' ('die Wirklichkeit der konkreten Freiheit').²³ The state is also described as the very embodiment of 'the reasonable life of self-conscious freedom' ('das vernünftige Leben der selbstbewußten Freiheit').²⁴

Such phrases leave ample room for discussion, about the relationship between freedom, individual and state in the Hegelian doctrine. As Hegel makes clear in his introduction, he sets out to describe a reasonable state. One must question whether Hegel would have regarded the inequitable, dysfunctional, autocratic entity of nineteenth-century Russia as a 'real' or proper state. It would appear Russian thinkers such as Chicherin ascribed to the tsarist state a fair measure of the characteristics of Hegel's rational and authoritative state, thereby seeking to privilege it over the individual. Such readings – or misreadings – of Hegel's passages concerning the relationship between state and individual were not confined to nineteenth-century Russia. Karl Popper, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*²⁵, J. L. Talmon, in *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*²⁶ and Isaiah Berlin in several influential essays²⁷, all interpret Hegel's political doctrine in an authoritarian vein, as the young Herzen had when he used the term 'despotism' to describe Hegel's philosophy. According to Tugendhat, Hegel grants the state and its laws 'absolute authority', with no room for individual conscience, which must melt away and disappear.²⁸

Hegel on revolution

It is not difficult to understand how Alexander Herzen's first readings of Hegel caused him to view the foreign philosopher as a despot,

and his followers, such as those in the Stankevich circle, as speculative, idle and apolitical. Herzen's outlook, as that of Granovsky, was greatly conditioned by his interest in the drama of history. As a youth, he had read intensely of the French Revolution and identified with its central characters. It appears that as Herzen persevered and continued to read Hegel, he had a 'eureka' moment, precisely when he realized that Hegel's thought was, rather than static and conservative, dynamic and revolutionary. It is not clear what made Herzen see Hegel in this light, but Hegel's writings on the French Revolution may provide an important clue.

As Schlegel poignantly observed, the French Revolution was one of the three great trends of the age. Most great thinkers of the time grappled with its implications, whether through historical analysis, philosophical speculation, or literary creation.²⁹ Hegel was, of course, a keen student of history. In that sense, he was not only concerned with the theoretical outlining of the order of society – what later came to be described as his vision of *Rechtsstaat*, the somewhat idealized and static state of law and justice – but also sought to explain the great occurrences of his generation, in particular, the socio-political upheaval in France, which he considered to constitute a 'world-historical event'.

A principal thesis of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Lectures on the philosophy of history) is that serious revolution is only necessary in places where the Reformation, and therefore freedom and reason, had not made inroads. Catholic France was a perfect example of what Hegel might dub, in today's parlance, a failed state. The central problem was the pervasive influence of religion, which held the populace in a state of mental slavery. Without the emancipation of the mind, external emancipation is simply not possible.³⁰ Among the factors that contributed to the outbreak of the French Revolution, Hegel cites a failure of the state to reconstruct itself on the basis of 'abstract individual wills', as well as the fact that the laws of the Catholic state were not supported by notions of freedom, reason, and conscience.³¹ In contrast, in Germany there was no revolution, and no need for one, as the Reformation had already cleared the path for secularization and proper thought.³² Hegel prefers this German 'reconciliation' of thought and reason with reality, a quasi-sacred process that is internalized by citizen and state, the ideal *Rechtsstaat*, to the violent, messy, chaotic melee often produced by the fervour of revolution. Nevertheless, it is clear from his opinion on the French Revolution that he not only admits the possibility of action against a dysfunctional state, but mandates it in certain circumstances.

Conclusion: Hegelian thought as the ‘algebra of revolution’

Hegel’s views on how a state can go wrong, and what conditions justify rebellion and overthrow of that state, shed light on the intersection of the actual and the ideal in his historical vision. If we now return to Herzen, we see that he appears to have understood the profound challenges in understanding Hegel’s writings, and maintains that many of those Russians who claimed to be Hegelians in fact were simply reactionaries hiding behind skewed readings of particular passages of Hegel’s works.

Herzen realized that Hegel wrote in his own language in which he defined his terms in a precise and idiosyncratic way. Most importantly, Herzen acknowledged that it required a great deal of toil and sweat to understand the master. One cannot merely read Hegel, but one must ‘live through’ his writings to soak up their meaning:

In the midst of this internecine feud I saw the necessity to drink from the source itself and studied Hegel seriously. I even think that a man who has not lived through Hegel’s *Phenomenology* [...], who has not passed through this forge and been tempered by it, is not complete, not modern. When I had grown accustomed to Hegel’s language and captured his method, I began to scrutinise that he was much closer to our view than to the view of his followers....³³

Herzen understood that Hegel had a revolutionary effect – one that Russian Hegelians such as Chicherin refused to acknowledge, or simply could not understand:

The philosophy is Hegel is the algebra of revolution; it emancipates a person in an unusual way [...] But, perhaps, intentionally, it is poorly formulated.³⁴

A close inspection of this statement shows the perspicacity of Herzen, commenting on the brilliance of Hegel. Hegel cannot be used to defend the status quo of a repressive state or allow it to become a means in and of itself. The constant process and charged dynamics of Hegel’s system and method demand re-examination and a degree of upheaval relative to any political entity. However, as Herzen reminds us, the main direction of Hegel’s teachings is to guide the individual to aspire to a worthy life engaged in self-cultivation, contemplation and the quest for enlightenment. The important changes are those which one realizes within oneself, but this does not absolve oneself from the responsibility to work

for social change. In this sense, Herzen understood Hegel as much more than a philosopher, but as a political force as well. Decades later, Lenin would quote Herzen's terse quip regarding the revolutionary aspect of Hegel in order to help light a fire under the Bolshevik's and provide an authentic ideological pedigree for the 1917 revolution.³⁵

As he matured, Herzen reconsidered his understanding of the progress of history as well as the ultimate question of the ends of life. Despite his initial rash judgement and misunderstanding, Herzen never really abandoned Hegel. Rather, it took the better part of his lifetime for his understanding to mature, in light of his experience, which then brought his earlier understanding of Hegel to a higher level, in true Hegelian fashion.

Notes

1. In 1829, Chaadaev circulated a manuscript that famously decried: 'Nous ne sommes ni de l'Occident ni de l'Orient, et nous n'avons les traditions ni de l'un ni de l'autre. Placés comme en dehors des temps, l'éducation universelle du genre humain ne nous a pas atteints'. ('We are neither from the Occident nor from the Orient, and we do not have the traditions of either. As we are placed outside of time, as it were, the general education of mankind does not reach us'.) (Chaadaev 1913, 77). (All translations are mine). The opening letter was first published in September 1836.
2. Cf. Shkolnikov (this volume) for an in-depth discussion.
3. Turgenev (1956) [1869], 260–261.
4. Ivan Kireevsky and P.G. Redkin (the latter also taught at Moscow University), are among the few Russians who actually attended Hegel's lectures. See Kireevsky (1861), vol. 1, 45; Tschizewskij (1939), 25ff.; Bourmeyster (2001), 165, 189.
5. Gans claims that the historical method of Hegel's *Vorlesungen* is empirical, however he also maintains that history is infused with reason. See Gans (1840), xiii–xiv.
6. See Breckman (2001), 564.
7. See Simon (1928).
8. See, for example, Ranke's foreword to his history of Germany in the Reformation, which concludes with the assertion: 'Denn die Wahrheit kann nur Eine sein'. ('The truth can only be one'.) (Ranke 1867, x).
9. Granovsky (1900), 241.
10. A. I. Herzen (Moscow) to N. P. Ogaryov (01.08.1833), in Herzen (1961), 21, 21.
11. A. I. Herzen (Vladimir) to N. Kh. Ketcher (28.02.1839), Herzen (1961), 22, 13. See also A. I. Herzen (Vladimir) to N.Kh. Ketcher (15.03.1839), Herzen (1961), 22, 15.
12. PR, Preface, xxii. On this debate see Shkolnikov (this volume).
13. A. I. Herzen, *Byloe i dumy* [Past and thoughts], ch. 25, in Herzen (1961) 9, 17.
14. Herzen and Ogaryov (1856–1860).
15. See Brower (1975), 127; Morrissey (1998), 22; Frede (2011), 154.

16. Herzen, 'Tret'ia krov'!' [Third Blood], *Kolokol* [The Bell] (15.11.1861), 1, in Herzen (1961), 5, 112.
17. Herzen, 'Po povodu studencheskikh izbienii' [In Regard to the Student Beatings] *Kolokol* [The Bell] (22.11.1861), 1, in Herzen (1961), 5, 113.
18. Herzen, '1865', *Kolokol* [The Bell] (01.01.1865), 1, in Herzen (1961), 9, 193.
19. Chicherin refers to himself as a 'governmental liberal' or 'conservative liberal', and Hamburg describes him as 'a Hegelian who looked on government as the product of historical development and as the surest guarantor of liberty', (Hamburg 1992, 222, 227).
20. Chicherin (1866), 491.
21. Ibid.
22. PR §137.
23. PR §260.
24. PR §270.
25. Popper (1945).
26. Talmon (1952).
27. E.g. Berlin (2002).
28. Tugendhat (1979), 349–350.
29. Schlegel (1798), 216.
30. See 'Enlightenment and Revolution', Section 4.3.3 of Phil. Hist., 541–542.
31. Ibid., 535.
32. Ibid., 533.
33. Herzen, *Byloe i dumy*, ch. 25, in Herzen (1961), 9, 23.
34. Ibid.
35. See Lenin (1912).

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3

Hegel's Tale in Romania

Edward Kanterian

Introduction

Romanian thinkers first began to study Hegel after his influence had waned in Germany. As a nation, Romania emerged only in 1856, when the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia first came under the influence of the West through the Treaty of Paris. These were united in 1861 and received a constitution in 1866. Transylvania remained part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of the First World War. By the late 1860s, notable members of the soon to emerge new political and cultural elite were spending their student years in Vienna or Berlin, manifesting a strong interest in German philosophy, including Hegel. On the occasion of Hegel's centennial commemoration in 1931 in Romania, it was even claimed:

Hegel's influence upon us Romanians manifested itself through the writings of those publicists who played a role in the creation of our political parties. Titu Maiorescu borrowed from Hegel's philosophy, which he became acquainted with as a student in Berlin, the theories which were to form the doctrine of the conservative Romanian party. Also as a student in Berlin, Mihail Kogălniceanu attended lectures by professors belonging to the Hegelian school, thus forming his liberal views. Equally, Ion Heliade-Rădulescu, a publicist and politician of great prestige during the age of our political rebirth, stood under the indirect influence of Hegelianism, the Hegelianism represented by the Frenchman Proudhon.¹

As a retrospective assessment of a nation that had come of age by the 1930s, this is significant. But the precise extent to which Hegel exerted

a substantial influence on Romanian thinkers in the nineteenth century is more difficult to pinpoint. The case is very different with respect to the twentieth century.

This chapter discusses the reception of Hegelian philosophy in Romania. In what follows, I first discuss two notable examples of the reception of Hegel in Romania in the nineteenth century: Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917) and Mihai Eminescu (1850–1889). For Maiorescu, Hegel was one among many sources that he drew on for developing his ideas about art, poetry and education; Eminescu, by contrast, is especially attracted by Hegel's account of history, which he partly uses (or abuses) for his nationalistic understanding of politics, whereas metaphysically he remains a Schopenhauerian. Then, I turn to Dumitru D. Roşca (1895–1980), who wrote a dissertation on Hegel and Taine in France, and introduced Hegel, through numerous translations and also Hegelian scholarship, to Romania, but in the end opted for a compromise with the Communist party line. The main focus of the chapter is on Constantin Noica (1909–1987), one of the most eminent Romanian philosophers of the twentieth century. Having praised the beauty of a purely rationalist, mathematical approach to philosophy in his early philosophical works, and after an episode with considerable affinities to fascism, Noica turned to Hegel while he was under house arrest by the Communist party. He not only wrote a metaphysical treatise that aimed at overcoming the dualism of the ideal and the real along broadly Hegelian lines, but also recounted the *Phenomenology* – as a tale. I consider three possible interpretations of how this tale about 'a man like all men' relates to Hegel's original, settling for a reading that sees the *Phenomenology* not as the final *Bildungsroman* and end of philosophy, but as an episode in the wider process of human spirit travelling through history.

Titu Maiorescu and Mihai Eminescu: Hegel's arrival in Romania in the nineteenth century

Maiorescu, a universal *homme de lettres* and politician who was to play a very important part in the modernization of his country, is one of the first Romanians to have engaged with Hegel. He was exposed to his ideas as a student in Berlin in 1859, attending lectures in psychology by the Hegelian Karl Werder (1806–1893). In the same year, he obtained his first doctorate at the University of Giessen with a dissertation on the nature of relation (*Das Verhältnis*²). The title indicates a Hegelian theme, but in fact he defended his thesis with a critique of Spinoza, Fichte and Hegel.³ References to Hegel's works, especially the *Encyclopaedia* and

the *Philosophy of Right*, occur in various other works, for instance in his lectures *Einiges Philosophische in gemeinfasslicher Form* ('Some philosophical issues in an approachable form') (1861), in which he quotes, approvingly, Hegel's 'What is real, is rational'.⁴ Maiorescu's true and lasting interest was enlightened education, less so absolute idealism; for him, Hegel's *dictum* summarized a faith in the lawfulness and causal necessity of what is real, fuelling our 'holy impulse' to acquire knowledge and educate the individual ('subjective *Geistesbildung*', 'subjective formation of the spirit').⁵ This interest in education partly explains why Maiorescu was also much influenced by one of Hegel's main opponents, Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), whose *Hauptpunkte der Logik* (1807) Maiorescu quoted more approvingly and extensively in the same work.

Maiorescu's aesthetics and literary theory, areas in which he published extensively, may also have been influenced by Hegel and his follower F. T. Vischer (1807–1887). For instance, in an essay on the nature of Romanian poetry from 1867, Maiorescu writes: 'Poetry, like all arts, is called for to express the beautiful, by contrast to the sciences which deal with truth. The first and greatest difference between truth and beauty is that truth encompasses only ideas, while beauty encompasses ideas manifested in their sensible form'.⁶ This echoes Hegel's '*Das Schöne bestimmt sich [...] als das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee*' ('The Beautiful [...] determines itself as the sensual appearance of the idea').⁷ But note that truth and beauty have no necessary connection for Maiorescu, each belonging to a separate science, whereas Hegel argues that the true, seen externally (i.e., in one of its moments), is as Idea not only true, but also beautiful.⁸ Maiorescu does not seem to have followed Hegel's dialectical movement, and after his death there was a prolonged debate about whether he ever was a Hegelian, rather than a Herbartian. Later in life, he veered towards Schopenhauer's account of art, claiming that the content of the beautiful is a Platonic Idea, which is intuited by the artist and the contemplator by transcending the limitation of the individual object.⁹ Overall, Maiorescu was too eclectic a thinker to be considered a Hegelian.

An ambiguous attitude to Hegel's ideas is also visible in Mihai Eminescu. A great poetic genius, venerated as the country's national poet, Eminescu was also exposed to German philosophy, during his years as a visiting student in Vienna and Berlin in 1869–1874, especially to Herbart, Kant ('the deepest of all mortals'), Schopenhauer and also Hegel. In Berlin, he attends Eduard Zeller's (1814–1908) lectures on German philosophy since Leibniz, C. V. Althaus' lectures '*Eine Entwicklung und Kritik der*

Principien der Hegelschen Philosophie', translates extensive parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason* coining new philosophical terms in Romanian, and translates a book by the Hegelian E. Th. Röscher (1803–1871), *Die Kunst der dramatischen Darstellung* (second ed., 1864) and so on. Eminescu did not publish anything on Hegel, but his reading and lectures notes mention him on a number of occasions, sometimes in longer passages, sometimes written directly in German.

In an 1871 letter to a prominent politician, Dumitru Brătianu (1818–1892), Eminescu wrote: 'If a generation has any merit, it is that of being a faithful agent of history, to carry out the duties imposed with necessity by the place it occupies in the course of ages. The history of the world reasons as well – slowly, but with certainty and justice: the history of mankind is the development of the thought of God'.¹⁰

This letter points to an aspect of Hegel's conception of history, as developed towards the end of the *Phenomenology*, e.g., when he describes actual history as the process of the Spirit of carrying forward the form of knowledge of itself,¹¹ as a knowing, self-mediating becoming, a slow procession and succession of spiritual manifestations (*Geister*), a gallery of pictures.¹² But in Hegel, this process of the Spirit's coming to know itself as Spirit through its manifestations, taken as they are in themselves, achieves the most universal insight, ends all history and is left with the memory of its own episodes ('hat zu seinem Wege die Erinnerung der Geister'). Eminescu, by contrast, uses this self-knowledge to derive and justify yet another individual spiritual manifestation (as if there could be a season finale, and then yet another ordinary episode). This further individual spiritual manifestation is the *Volk*, the people. His view is that the present is almost entirely determined by the past, the past of one's collective, one's *nation*, the product of 'a long chain of causes'. This gave support to Eminescu's nationalism and collectivism, for as he continued in the letter to Brătianu (who in Eminescu's view had contributed to the national rebirth of Romania): 'It is an axiom of history that everything good is the result of the reasoning of the general and everything bad the result of the reasoning of the individual. [...] We shall therefore be guided by the reasoning and needs of our people, not by our own, probably received from foreigners'.¹³ This was Hegel appropriated to local political purposes, quite intolerant ones. Eminescu's attacks against Jews and Hungarians were legion. He defined a nation, whose existence was justified by the necessity of history, by exclusion of all non-Romanian ethnicities. This implied an anti-Hegelian point: not everything real was true: the co-existence with ethnicities alien to a nation's essence was possible, but evil, created by human will. 'There is nothing non-necessary

in the world, save what is created by human arbitrariness. [...] This arbitrary element is irrational and therefore barbaric', Eminescu wrote, in an article from 1870¹⁴, in which he attacked the 'magyarised kikes' of the newspaper *Pester Lloyd* for supporting the autonomy of the various nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire while forgetting to mention the autonomy of Transylvania (in Eminescu's view a Romanian, and not a Hungarian principality).

Overall, Eminescu's metaphysics and conception of history were more dualistic and deterministic than Hegelian, despite evolutionist elements. As he explained in a letter to Maiorescu in 1874, he accepted Kant's dichotomy between thing in itself and appearance, especially under its Schopenhauerian guise as will and representation.¹⁵ While he pointed out that Schopenhauer's system lacked a philosophy of right, of the state and of history, arguably the strong points of Hegel's philosophy, he stressed that these lacunae could still be covered by Schopenhauer's metaphysics. The atemporal elements in history, law and politics 'can be organized as an evolution of antinomies, but not in the sense of Hegel's evolution of the idea. For in Hegel thought and being are identical – and for me they are not'.¹⁶

Other Romanian thinkers appropriated Hegel's ideas to their needs. For example, the most notable thinker at the end of the century, Vasile Conta (1845–1882), seems to have thought that Hegel was compatible with his own materialism and his psychologist theory of the mind. In 1879, he wrote: 'Hegel argued rightly that the same logical laws which guide the formation of ideas in the mind of an individual also guide the formation of the ideas of a people or all mankind throughout the ages'.¹⁷ Like some left Hegelians, Conta interpreted Hegel's assertion that the idea decides to step out of itself and become nature as a step towards materialism. But 'nature thus understood is not closely connected to logic any longer, and can't be known only by the dialectical method; therefore, the empirical investigation also becomes useful'.¹⁸ Conta is generally considered to have followed the positivism and empiricism developed in France and England of the time, but a closer look at his metaphysics of nature might offer some (Schellingian?) surprises, because he attempted to formulate a law of all matter based on 'undulating motion', as he called it.

D. D. Roșca: Hegel translated and explained

In the early twentieth century interest in Hegel was on the rise. In 1931, an issue (quoted above) of the leading philosophy journal, *Revista de*

filosofie, was dedicated to Hegel's centennial, with contributions by several prominent philosophers, including Ion Petrovici (1882–1972), Mircea Florian (1888–1960), Tudor Vianu (1898–1964) and Constantin Rădulescu-Motru (1892–1957), with articles such as 'Hegel's Theory of the State', 'Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion', or 'The Rebirth of Hegelianism', altogether over 100 pages. An important step forward was made by Dumitru D. Roșca, who in 1928 took his doctorate at the Sorbonne, under the supervision of Émile Bréhier (1876–1952), with a thesis on Hegel's influence on the French historian, philosopher and literary critic Hippolyte Taine (1828–1893) (described by Nietzsche as 'the first living historian').¹⁹ Hitherto Taine had been thought to be an adept of Comte's positivism. Roșca undertook a meticulous comparison between Hegel and Taine, and showed that the latter had a largely Hegelian conception of reality and knowledge, as developed in *Le Positivisme Anglais: Études sur Stuart Mill* (1864) and *De l'Intelligence* (1870). Roșca showed that for Taine reality is essentially conceptual, that existence is logic externalized, and that the universe develops towards an Idea.²⁰ Taine assumed an isomorphism between thought and reality: 'there is a logic of things just as there is a logic of thought, and the latter mirrors the former'.²¹ This isomorphism allows us to know the essence of the world, without experience, for the laws of the combination of concepts are the fundamental laws of the universe – clearly an anti-Kantian view. But Taine did not follow Hegel's conception of the dialectic, or the distinction between intellect and reason, and remained in many respects closer to Spinoza's panlogism, as Roșca critically pointed out. He also identified close parallels between Hegel's and Taine's account of art as a mode of knowledge.²² Roșca's dissertation was an impressive (and influential) comparative exercise, demonstrating a degree of knowledge of Hegel's works missing in his Romanian predecessors.²³

While Roșca's dissertation was initially an original contribution to the international, and specifically the French reception of Hegel (containing, as an appendix, the first French translation of *Das Leben Jesu*), he was soon to contribute to the reception of Hegel in Romania as well. After his return from France, he initially focused on other topics (such as Descartes, the tragic spirit, utility). In 1943, he examined Hegel's *Logic* in a long essay, in which he appears as a very competent historian of philosophy and clear writer. At the core of Hegel's logic lies an organicist-religious idea:

The principal forms of reality stand in organic correlation with one another and the whole they compose. [...] In short: reality, in its totality, is life. [...] To understand its basic elements, the Hegelian

system must be understood as the imposing externalization of a gigantic effort to demonstrate rationally and in an abstract manner the mystical-religious vision which affirms that reality, in its totality, is essentially life.²⁴

This may not come as a great revelation to today's readers, but for a Romanian audience such explanations were useful at a time when Hegel's works were not even available in translation.

The essay also contains detailed reflections on the difficulty of translating Hegel into Romanian. For instance, Roșca pointed out that while in the works of most other German thinkers 'Wirklichkeit' means 'reality' (Romanian: 'realitate'), Hegel's 'Wirklichkeit' derives from *Wirken*, from "action," from "effecting some result". 'Wirklichkeit' means in Hegel's texts a complex of actions, more precisely of "actings"; the word thus expresses "a whole in motion, an action, the act itself."²⁵ Roșca was clearly predestined to be the first Romanian translator of Hegel. But after the Communist takeover in 1947 he, and virtually all other non-Marxist philosophers, were silenced for over two decades. In the 1960s, the Stalinist censorship slightly loosened its grip, and Roșca began to publish major translations of Hegel's works, including the *Science of Logic*, the *Encyclopedia* and many of Hegel's lectures. To compare, consider that the bulk of Hegel's work had been first translated in France around the 1860s, 100 years earlier than in Romania.²⁶ In 1967 Roșca also published *Însemnări despre Hegel (Notes on Hegel)*, one of the very few books on Hegel in Romania written by then.²⁷ We should not expect to find original interpretations in this work. Romanian philosophers were barely starting to publish again, and unlike the generation of Maiorescu and Eminescu, or the pre-war generation, philosophers were now cut off from contemporary discussion in the West. Roșca's book exemplifies this provinciality. While it contains a valuable discussion of Hegel's logic and an introductory essay on his philosophy, it also contains numerous references to Marx and especially Lenin, taking sides in the 'great battle' between 'Marxist materialism and bourgeois idealism' that was allegedly raging in the 1960s. Roșca's Hegelian tale is a sorry one: once a promising young researcher with an acclaimed dissertation from the Sorbonne, he made compromises with the party line, which allowed him to publish again.

Constantin Noica: Hegel renewed and retold

While Roșca's Hegel interpretation was a solid academic exercise, without any claim to originality, Constantin Noica was to offer an altogether

different approach. With over thirty books, Noica remains to this day one of the most prolific and original Romanian philosophers.²⁸ In his pre-war phase he focused mostly on the rationalist tradition, authoring books on metaphysical themes in Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz and Kant, on the philosophy of the individual, and on the scientific character of European culture. He translated Augustine (*De Magistro*), Descartes (*Regulae, Meditationes*), Kant (*De Mundi Sensibilis*), later Plato, Aristotle, ancient and Byzantine Aristotle commentators. He also contributed extensively to journals and magazines, with reviews (e.g., of Adickes' *Kants Lehre von der doppelten Affektion*, Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, or Eliade's and Gide's novels), obituaries (e.g., of Vaihinger), essays (e.g., on the logic of the nation, religious ecstasy, Carl Schmitt and so on) and also commentaries on political problems in Romania, from a largely nationalist point of view. Towards the end of the 1930s, he became attached to the fascist Iron Guard and its promise of a national and spiritual rebirth through suffering and sacrifice. He claimed to feel sorry for his Jewish friends not so much because they would be hit unjustly by the fascists (for did not Plato say that the just ones suffer less than the unjust ones?), but because they would not be able to see what was, apparently, good about the Iron Guard – *nota bene* a terroristic organization who had assassinated two Romanian prime ministers.²⁹ In 1938–1939, he was a visiting student at the Sorbonne, attending for example lectures by Leon Brunschvicg (1869–1944), and he spent the war years mostly at the German-Romanian Institute in Berlin, while temporarily also attending Heidegger's lectures. He does not seem to have seen any incompatibility between Kant's philosophy which he adored, and a Nazi philosopher like Alfred Baeumler, for he published an article about the latter's apology for Nazism without any trace of critical discernment.³⁰ Noica was to pay dearly for his fascist leanings. In 1949–1958, after the Communist takeover, he was forbidden to write and placed under house arrest. In 1958–1964, he was imprisoned in the infamous Communist jail Jilava. He never obtained a chair, but after his release he was allowed to publish many books, including those he had written before his imprisonment. Unfortunately, this freedom was bought at a price: Noica is now known to have collaborated with the Securitate, the Communist secret police.³¹

The spirit in which Noica had written his pre-war books had been that of mathematical or formal perfection. He argued in his first book, *Mathesis sau bucuriile simple* (*Mathesis, or the Simple Joys*, 1934), that the true achievement of European culture is the idea of a universal science, following the paradigm of Euclidean geometry. Science means

abstraction and construction, the creation of atemporal, *a priori*, pure entities, structures and realities far removed from nature and history. For 'we are not nature any longer', and 'history is mere corruption'.³² Ever since Pythagoras, and especially in the works of the great mathematicians, logicians and rationalists from Plato to Husserl, European culture has been striving for 'the glory of the One, the Great, the Immutable', 'the formal, linear beauty of the mathematical truth sought in things'.³³ Noica argued for a sort of dualism. The ideal and the real, mind and world, truth and history are incompatible with each other, and we need to break with history, turn our back *on* the world of change and death, and find true happiness and freedom in the solitary construction of formal calculi.³⁴ In short, for our salvation we must pursue a *mathesis universalis* of the soul.³⁵

After the war, this daring dualistic defence of the mathematical spirit of our culture was replaced by a different model. During his years in house arrest he devoted himself to a close study of Goethe and especially Hegel, who had played only a minor role in his pre-war writings and who henceforth will be Noica's prized philosopher. By 1950, he completed the first part of what was to become his main work, a metaphysical treatise entitled *Devenirea întru ființă* (*Becoming Within Being*, 1981, English translation 2009). This first part was *Essay on Traditional Philosophy* (*Încercare asupra filozofiei tradiționale*). Hegel provided Noica with a model as to how the divide between the ideal and the real could be overcome through a new understanding of 'history', the development of concepts and ideas that Noica had previously seen as belonging to an immutable realm.

Noica now believed that he could make sense of the coming and going of philosophical systems, indeed of their necessary succession. For instance, in his first book published after his imprisonment, *Douăzeci și șapte trepte ale realului* (*27 Stages of Reality*, 1969), he attempted to show how Plato's five categories in the *Sophist* (being, rest, change, sameness, difference), Aristotle's ten and Kant's twelve can be presented as belonging to a progressive chain, leading from the inanimate via the animate to the realm of man. He also revised his understanding of philosophy. Philosophy was now opposed to science. Science is theoretical, objective, closed in itself, whereas philosophy reacts against the purely theoretical, getting back to the rough ground, the realm of uncertainty, contingency, division.³⁶ This encounter with the real world forces philosophy to undertake successive steps of self-reflection not required in the sciences: the consciousness of one's existence, the consciousness of one's limited existence, the consciousness of the possibility of overcoming this limitation.³⁷ Philosophy is called for to achieve this overcoming.

Hegel's influence in the *Essay* is most visible in the preference Noica gives to Hegel's categories over Kant's. He discusses Kant's table of categories at great length,³⁸ and concludes with dissatisfaction that the first two categories of each title (unity-plurality, reality-negation, inherence/subsistence-causality/dependence, possibility-existence) do not really combine to yield the third category in each case (totality, limitation, community). For instance, concerning the derivation of necessity from existence and possibility, he writes: 'If in the synthesis *Existenz, die durch die Möglichkeit selbst gegeben ist* [existence, which is given by possibility itself] Kant is introducing something reminiscent of the ontological argument (repudiated by himself!), then the necessity of an existence follows from its mere possibility only because necessity has been thought in the existence'.³⁹ It follows that necessity is not really deducible from the other two categories, and the same holds for all the other third categories. We must therefore start with three terms from the outset, 'basic and irreducible'.⁴⁰ From this, and the fact that the third term is actually the strongest, which makes the other two terms possible and towards which they point, Noica proceeds to adopt a fundamental dialectical structure for ontology, strongly inspired by, if not exactly following Hegel, consisting of the terms Becoming, Becoming within (or in-to) Being ('devenirea întru ființă'), Being.⁴¹ This threefold distinction offered a synthesis of the two main conflicting metaphysical principles in European philosophy, Being (Parmenides and Plato) and Becoming/subjectivity (Kant and Hegel), through the third theme of Becoming within Being. The *Essay* was largely programmatic and historical, and only by 1981, in his ontological treatise *Tratat de ontologie*, did he offer the full system.⁴² The treatise is extremely ambitious, an attempt to account for the whole of reality, physical, historical, intellectual, abstract, enriching the traditional ontological vocabulary with notions from modern physics, like 'field' and 'wave'. Noica's admits that his conception of Being owes much to Hegel, even where the latter is criticized:

We do not mean here the monolithic Being of Parmenides [...], or Heidegger's Being, which is silent in Parmenides, and ends again in silence in Heidegger. Rather, we mean the *undeclared* Being of an ontology active at the heart of every philosophy. This being is not monolithic, but trinitarian, and only Hegel expressed it first, in his own way [...], resorting to it when he condensed his dialectic, i.e. his speculation about Being, into the threefold of *Allgemeinheit* [generality], *Besonderheit* (which represents the determinations) and

Einzelheit [individuality]. Everything in him is a development of this threefold (usually presented in a defective manner as thesis, antithesis, synthesis). But this is the problem: in Hegel we have a *development*, and not an envelopment, which ought to be the proper model of Being. And at the end of the development something is left over: the Spirit.⁴³

According to Noica, this is unsatisfactory, for we are presented with a dilemma: We may say that Being is the development as a whole, or instead that Being is the Spirit at the final stage of the development. But neither will give us an ontology, a way of focusing on Being as Being. For if we say the former, then Being won't be manifest anywhere specifically, 'in all its fullness and fulfilment'.⁴⁴ But if we say the latter, then Being is, like the Spirit, just the end of a development, almost a nothing, or at best something to be taken up again, in infinite repetition. Noica's alternative is to take the individuality-determination-generality threefold (I-D-G) as the core ontological model, which operates in different combinations in all philosophies, sometimes exaggerating one element, sometimes another. One part of Noica's approach is to trace the history of these different combinations of I-D-G, the other is to figure out an ontology in which they are put into a harmony which will yield an understanding of 'accomplished Being' ('ființa împlinită').

Two critical points are raised here. The first concerns Noica's relation to Hegel. Do we not encounter here a reluctance to adopt Hegel's *dialectics*, as already seen in other Romanian thinkers? Noica adopts the I-D-G model from Hegel's system, but it seems to be, at least *prima facie*, more of an abstraction of very general categories. If he will not be able to tell a story similar to Hegel's, using this model, with a similar ending (absolute knowledge), how much of Hegel are we left with, especially with respect to his conception of rational history? The second point is more general: why exactly should we accept I-D-G as a model of *ontology*? We do not even have to consider here arguments against the possibility of metaphysics, as raised in the twentieth in the analytic tradition (e.g., by Wittgenstein, Carnap or Quine). Noica ignored this tradition when developing his system (was this due to the conditions of his house arrest?). But we can raise a point made by Kant at the end of the Transcendental Analytic, surely familiar to Noica. We have *a priori* concepts that refer to objects (of experience). These are the categories. But we also have highly general concepts that are employed merely to compare and classify other concepts and ideas. These are the concepts of reflection (*Reflexionsbegriffe*), e.g., identity and difference,

matter and form.⁴⁵ They do not have any Kantian objective reality, but belong merely to a transcendental topic.⁴⁶ Metaphysicians such as Leibniz have mistaken them for categories and have fallen prey to a transcendental illusion, an ‘amphiboly’, basing their ontological claims on highly general and vacuous concepts of reflection.⁴⁷ Does not Noica fall prey to a similar ‘amphiboly’? His I-D-G threefold might just involve such concepts of reflection, useful, maybe, for classifying the metaphysical systems of the past, but not giving us an ontology. The question extends to Hegel as well, if he is supposed to have given us an ontology.

The Hegelian turn allowed Noica to make sense not only of the passing of philosophical systems, but also of history as a whole. This idea is already expressed in the *Essay*. Shortly after he has argued for the necessity of a ‘basic and irreducible’ threefold ontological structure, he writes:

Does the so-called ‘evolution of humanity’, and on an ontogenetic level the evolution of the individual, not follow this threefold, at least where the categories are rediscovered? For instance, with respect to quantity human experience starts (in the child or in the childhood of the spirit) with totality and singularity (everything exists initially, the world appears as One, as a cohesive block), moving on to plurality, which is the bitter experience of adolescence, and then to unity, the experience of wisdom in the years of maturity – with the tendency of superior spirits and cultures to rediscover in the unity the One? [...] There is certainly a ladder in this movement of the categories, a ladder in which we find in the higher rungs everything which constituted the lower ones.⁴⁸

This suggests the possibility of a narrative of mankind’s history, and points of course to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. That the *Phenomenology* could be read as a *Bildungsroman* has been suggested before, most prominently by Josiah Royce (1855–1916) in his *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (1919), who described the *Phenomenology* as a ‘biography of the world-spirit’, containing ‘the comedies and tragedies of the inner life’ and depicting not real occurrences, but ‘the fortunes which occur to ideas, to purposes, [...] to categories’.⁴⁹ Royce, and Jean Hippolyte (1907–1968), pointed out that Hegel’s inspiration here was Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* and Rousseau’s *Emile*.⁵⁰ Surprisingly, Noica rejected the modern *Bildungsroman*, and implicitly also *Wilhelm Meister*, as focusing too much on singular characters and destinies, which lack

any representative generality. Royce's description of *Wilhelm Meister* as a romance whose hero interests us precisely as a type and less 'as an elementally attractive personality'⁵¹ seems to be more fair.

Noica's rejection of Goethe (against whom he wrote a whole book)⁵² stands also in tension with one of Noica's most remarkable books, *Povestiri despre om (Tales of Man)*, an attempt to recount the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a tale. Absurdly, the immediate reason for his incarceration in 1958–1964 was not his fascist past, but this book, typescripts of which he had clandestinely distributed to friends, many of whom were also arrested as a consequence. *Tales* was published in France by exiled friends while Noica was still imprisoned, and only published in Romania in 1980. Noica's predilection for dialectical narration in *27 Stages of Reality* has already been mentioned. He employed this method in other books as well, but nowhere is it employed in a more masterly fashion than in the recounting of the very model of this method, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The book has two parts. The first part, entitled 'The Unusual Adventures of Consciousness in Search of Certainty' and narrated in a picaresque style covers half the *Phenomenology*. Each chapter has summaries of 'what has happened so far'. For instance, the episode 'Pleasure and Necessity'⁵³ starts with this summary:

By trying to get clear about the world and himself, man moved from disappointment to disappointment, be it because he granted everything to the world, be it because he granted everything to himself, be it because he said: My reason is one with the world. In fact, having reached the stage of reason, man risks falling lower than ever before. And here, Hegel says, action enters the stage.⁵⁴

The second part of *Tales* is narrated as an actual tale, whose hero is 'a man like all men', a John Doe of the Spirit, and covers the whole *Phenomenology*.⁵⁵ Here is how it starts, with 'The Tale of Sensation':

Once upon a time there was a man like all men, a young one, who felt to the fullest, thought only as much as needed, like all young people, and was enjoying life. His sensations were especially satisfying, for through them, he thought, he could know the world inside and out, in all her richness and truth. This is why he trusted his sensation so much.

One day something happened to him. Nothing special, oh no. Something rather ordinary: he felt the emptiness of life.⁵⁶

And from this we are taken through the first episode of the *Phenomenology* ('Sense-Certainty'), the dramatic story of the collapse of immediate sensory certainty into the generality of perception:

What do we do when we eat or drink, and why did those ancient mysteries speak of the mysteries of eating and drinking? We reject things for what they are and treat them like generalities. The ancients ate Ceres and drank Bacchus; what we harvest are still just generalities. An apple is not an apple, but a nourishing substance. We don't *believe* in the things of this world, since we annihilate and consume them. You say that they are true for you, but you contradict yourself and contradict them at every step. [...] Everything is rejecting our certainty about the reality of individual things, leaving in their stead the ash of generality. Nothing is what it is, everything is ghostlike, spectral. What void is about to emanate from the human heart and cover the all-enduring world?⁵⁷

This is followed by 'The Tale of Perception', and 'The Tale of the Understanding', which completes part A of the *Phenomenology*, and so on, to the very end of Hegel's book, all covered in under 140 pages. The last chapter is called 'What is man, if it is worth thinking about him? The Absolute Spirit'. It starts thus:

Once upon the time there was a man like all men, who became – well, what? A soul of the world, one might have said, or of knowledge and wisdom. Some have said that at this point the soul turned into Hegel and wanted to end the world with himself. But Hegel called it Spirit. Some have said that it is man deified. But we will say: it is a man who has lived his story to the end; it is a man like all men who has become man.⁵⁸

And the chapter ends thus:

Here Hegel ended the story of man, who first had told Hegel the story. And we, who are retelling it, know that he was describing, with his last thoughts, what he was to do later, in the *Encyclopedia*, as if he was remembering the future, as has been said about the prophets. [...] But now, after they had accompanied man along his development, all the spectres of history, and even Hegel, retreated, like shadows. Man remained on the stage of spirit certain of himself, a spirit which would next retell itself as a logic, as that logic which he has been

writing ever since he became aware that he is human. This was to be like the tale of the deity, after the tale of man had been told. But what if the tale of the first and foremost one can't be told? What if, asked those succeeding Hegel, the deity does not exist?⁵⁹

The narration is certainly gripping, and we do get a sense of how Hegel's argument moves forward. But what do Noica's *Tales* tell us philosophically, apart from presenting Hegel's difficult book in an accessible way, as Noica announces in the foreword⁶⁰? What is the status of his tale?

Three possibilities suggest themselves. First, the *Tales* replace the *Phenomenology*. They do not only present Hegel's argument in a more succinct, but a more adequate way, since the *Bildungsroman* model underlying the conception of the *Phenomenology* is better approximated by the *Tales*. However, this will not do, because, as Hyppolite pointed out, for Hegel the *Phenomenology* is not really 'a novel, but a work of science', which 'results from the very nature of consciousness'⁶¹: 'The element of truth is the concept, and its true form the scientific system', writes Hegel in the Preface. Further: 'The systematic development of truth in scientific form can alone be the true shape in which truth exists'.⁶² Finally: 'True thoughts and scientific insight can only be won by the labour of the concept. [...] It is truth which has successfully reached its own inherent native form'.⁶³ The *Phenomenology* is this very system. The itinerary must be actually traversed, to some extent in a similar way in which all steps in a mathematical proof must be undertaken, or at least known.⁶⁴ This means that nothing can replace it, especially not a tale which compresses and skips long passages of the argument, drops certain concepts from the original and introduces new ones ('a man like all men').

A second possibility is that the tale comes after the end of the *Phenomenology*, after the absolute knowledge of the Spirit has been reached. All that can happen now is an infinite recounting of what *has* happened, i.e., both what the *Phenomenology* presented as having happened in the history of Spirit, and the *Phenomenology's* developing this history. The party is over, so let us have fond reminiscences of it. But this means: philosophy is over, philosophy understood in Hegel's sense, as a development with a terminal point. This was not Noica's view of philosophy. He thought that philosophy has a bright and exciting future, as has mankind.

This brings us to a third option: The *Phenomenology* is itself just another episode in a process wider than that described even by the *Phenomenology*. It is an extremely important episode, but not the season finale, and for this reason nothing the recounting of which as a tale brings Noica into

contradiction with Hegel. As seen, Noica was strongly inspired by Hegel, but did not accept his precise conception of dialectics. Whether this can work depends on whether, devoid of genuine Hegelian dialectics, Noica has enough conceptual resources to develop his own *Bildungsroman*, as opposed to a mere rhapsody in I-D-G.

Conclusion

Overall, we need to distinguish two periods in the reception of Hegel's philosophy in Romania. During the first period, in the nineteenth century, Romanians were acquainted with his thinking mostly abroad, especially in Vienna and Berlin. But they were either too eclectic or too much under the spell of other ideas, e.g., nationalist ones or Schopenhauer's, to fully assimilate Hegel's absolute idealism. During the second period Hegel began to be studied in his own right, and also translated and introduced to a wider audience. Some philosophers were substantially influenced by him, but distorted his ideas, for political or philosophical reasons. Most remarkably, what seems to be missing in the Romanian reception of Hegel throughout the ages is an engagement with his *political* philosophy – a generally underdeveloped area in Romania. This task remains for future generations to explore.⁶⁵

Notes

1. Rădulescu-Motru (1931), 332. All translations from Romanian are mine.
2. Published in Romanian translation only in 1981; see Maiorescu (1981), 86–136.
3. See Ianoși (1996), 50. This thesis was rewritten in French in 1859 as *La relation. Essai d'un nouveau fondement de la philosophie* in order to receive a second doctorate at the Sorbonne, an aim which was not achieved.
4. Maiorescu (1861), 138f.
5. Later, Maiorescu extended this view to the scientific study of culture in general. See Mamulea (2007), 162f.
6. Maiorescu (1998), 16. In 1861 he had written, in more Romantic vein: 'Nicht einmal Z. B. zur Würdigung der grossen Dichter, die Sie doch so oft lesen, werden Sie gelangen, wenn Sie nicht gerade in ihrem philosophischen Gehalt ihre Bedeutung aufzusuchen wissen. Ist doch wahres Dichtertum von der Philosophie unzertrennlich, denn die Poesie ist eben der Versuch des Menschen, das Einzelne zum Ganzen abzurunden' (1861, 21f.). ('You will not even arrive at an appreciation of the great poets, whom you read so often, if you are not able to see their meaning in their philosophical content. True poetry cannot be separated from philosophy, for poetry is man's attempt to round out the individual to the whole').
7. Aesth. I.I.3.

8. Ibid.
9. See Pop (1944), 823. The debate about the classification of Maiorescu's ideas took place in the interwar period, between Tudor Vianu, Liviu Rusu and others. See Vianu (1933), Pop (1944) and Ianoși (1996), 75, 140.
10. Eminescu (1871).
11. PS # 803.
12. PS # 808.
13. Ibid.
14. Eminescu (1870).
15. Eminescu to Maiorescu, 5. February 1874, in Eminescu (1989), 48.
16. Ibid.
17. Conta (1914), 449.
18. Quoted in Ghișe/Gogoneață (1985), 571.
19. Roșca (1928).
20. See Zvanciuc (2011), 168f.
21. Quoted in Zvanciuc (2011), 168.
22. See Munteanu (1967).
23. On a more recent reassessment on Taine's relation to Hegel, and Roșca's interpretation, see Dumas (1981).
24. Roșca (1943), 103f.
25. Quoted in Noica (1992), 210.
26. See Bohm/Mudimbe (1994), 8f.
27. Among the very few other books published before Roșca's we have Bengescu (1873), Bumbești (1944) and Vianu (1933). There were also a number of books on Hegel written by Marxists after 1947, such as those by C. I. Gulian (1914–2011), but they were of little philosophical interest, having been written by ideologues who denounced any philosophy deviating from the official nationalist-socialist party-line as 'bourgeois'. Here is a sample, by Gulian, from 1957: 'Like all people, the Romanians have a normal, healthy attitude towards death, considering it a natural phenomenon, which its millenary experience has assimilated through the law of the mind [...]. To know [this] is something entirely different from the desire for death and its glorification, preached by the decadent bourgeois ideology' (quoted in Tismăneanu (2012), an article which describes Gulian's nefarious role in the destruction of Romanian academic philosophy during the Stalinist period).
28. The other great Romanian systematic philosopher was Lucian Blaga (1895–1961).
29. See Noica (1994), 294f.
30. Here is a typical passage from Baeumler, partly quoted by Noica (1999), 295: 'When we say Heil Hitler!, we mean Heil Germany! [...] Hitler is not less than the idea, he is more than the idea, because he is real' (Giesecke 1999, 127).
31. See Manea (2008) Manolescu (2013). For a defense of Noica on this matter, by a former disciple, see Pleșu (2006).
32. Noica (1992), 52, 33.
33. Noica (1992), 63 and ch. 1.
34. See Noica (1992), ch. 4.
35. Noica (1992), 34.
36. See Ianoși (1996), 296.
37. Ibid.

38. See Noica (1981), 36–64; Noica (2009a), 36–65.
39. Noica (1981), 69; Noica (2009a), 69.
40. Noica (1981), 70; Noica (2009a), 70.
41. Noica believed that the Romanian preposition ‘întru’ is the most accurate to describe the fundamental relation between being and becoming. Alas, it is difficult to translate. See Noica (2009a), 214; Blyth (2009), 27.
42. For an overview, see Ciomoș (2006); Blyth (2009).
43. Noica (1981), 168f.; Noica (2009a), 166f.
44. Ibid.
45. Kant (1998 [1787]), B319ff.
46. Ibid., B324.
47. B326f.
48. Noica (1981), 72; Noica (2009a), 72f.
49. Royce (1919), 149.
50. Royce (1919), 147f.; Hyppolite (1979), 11.
51. Royce (1919), 148.
52. See Noica (1976).
53. PS #360ff.
54. Noica (1980), 79.
55. Noica mentions in the foreword that he had written a third part, “The Diary of Consciousness,” ‘which had to be left aside’ (1980, 5).
56. Noica (1980), 119.
57. Noica (1980), 123.
58. Noica (1980), 246.
59. Noica (1980), 250.
60. Noica (1980), 117.
61. Hyppolite (1979), 12. See also Liiceanu (1992), 10ff.
62. PS #5.
63. PS #20.
64. I say ‘to some extent’, given Hegel’s critical remarks about proofs in mathematics in #42–43.
65. I am grateful to Florin George Calian, Michael Inwood, Lisa Herzog and Mariana Kanterian for help in writing this essay.

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Part II

Hegel's Thought in Scandinavia and Germany

4

Hegelianism in Restoration Prussia, 1841–1848: Freedom, Humanism and ‘Anti-Humanism’ in Young Hegelian Thought

Douglas Moggach and Widukind De Ridder

Introduction

In the works of Kant (1724–1804), Fichte (1762–1814), and Hegel, German idealism effected a philosophical revolution in its new conceptions of reason, and of reason’s practical role in legislating for morality and politics. The central tenet of Hegel’s idealism is the unity of thought and being, a processual unity secured by the historical realization of reason in the world. Hegel’s philosophy provided a self-conscious comprehension of this unity and its expressions in existence. In his *Philosophy of Right* (1820–1821), Hegel had asserted that the real is rational, and the rational is real;¹ but this is a speculative claim, affirming both identity and non-identity. Its ambiguity had serious exegetical consequences for Hegel’s students and followers. The reality or effectiveness of reason could be understood to signify an ongoing historical process, still burdened with contradictions and insufficiencies that must be purged away in the course of further development. Alternatively, Hegel’s claim might appear to confer rational legitimacy on the existing political and social order. The question is the extent to which the prevailing forms of religion, politics and society satisfy the demands of reason and freedom, and how are these standards themselves to be understood and defended? The Hegelian heritage split in response to these questions.

This chapter discusses the developments of young Hegelianism in Restoration Prussia, with a special focus on Max Stirner’s radical critique of Hegelian thinking. It presents an overview of the history of Young

Hegelianism in the 1830s and 1840s, and addresses the theoretical issues raised by Stirner's attack in 1844. It examines important aspects of Young Hegelianism, including ideas of a modernized civic humanism and emancipation, and traces the Young Hegelians' reconfiguration of Hegel's thought in order to eliminate what they saw as its conservative or insufficiently critical elements. The refurbished republicanism of the Young Hegelians took up the new challenges of the industrial age that was dawning in Germany, with special attention to the social question and the intransigent conflicting interests that typified the emergent economic order. Stirner's critique is framed by its anti-humanist repudiation of Left Hegelian emancipatory projects. These debates turn on the relation between individual and society, or 'particularity' and 'universality': while the humanist readers of Hegel uphold a conception of practical reason that remains bound by certain universal imperatives, Stirner instead develops the explicitly anti-universalist notion of 'ownness' or particular interest. Stirner's aim is to ironize the relation between individual and society, by not only criticizing the positing of a human essence but the conceptualization of the self in its entirety. In his argumentative strategy, Stirner leaves behind the idea of a careful and thorough internal critique of Hegelianism, which Bauer saw as central to philosophy, and instead turns to irony and rhetorical posturing. Stirner's criticisms highlight, by way of contrast, central features of Bauer's reformed Hegelianism. Despite Bauer's attempts to defend left Hegelianism, Stirner's work delivered a decisive blow, which considerably weakened the movement, leading the way to other, radically different forms of philosophical thinking, such as nihilism and anarchism. But Stirner's philosophy remains politically inert, whereas the project of the Young Hegelians is still in need of completion.

The development of Young Hegelianism in the 1830s and 1840s

The first divisions among Hegel's followers began to appear in the 1830s, and arose primarily in response to the interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of religion. 'Das Leben Jesu' (1835), by David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874), inaugurated a debate that by the 1840's went well beyond the reliability of gospel accounts of Christ and their relation to the conceptual core of Christianity. The historical-critical analysis of the gospels gave way to a devastating critique of theology in general, and to a philosophical critique of the Restoration political order, which sought to base itself on orthodox Christian foundations.² This critique,

moreover, was no longer confined to German academia, but took on a much broader cultural significance. It therefore had an important impact on the reception of Hegel's philosophy in the German territories and abroad.³ Never a closely-knit movement, the Hegelian School was a loose association, with various geographical foci and publishing networks scattered throughout the German states. Its shifting political landscape and lively internal polemics have misled a number of recent commentators to reducing these debates to insubstantial political posturing, while neglecting the critical engagement of the Hegelians with the dissolution of the old order, and with the formative processes of modern society, its crises and potential cures.

Recent research has emphasized this creative aspect of Young Hegelian thought.⁴ Its innovative character emerges in its critical appropriation of Hegel, and its attempt at a rejuvenated republicanism that would be compatible with the demands of modernity. The political task of the Young Hegelians was to redefine republican ideas of freedom, to defend the Enlightenment heritage of reason and of emancipation from traditional relationships, and to rectify the errors and limitations of Enlightenment thought, which, for all its cultural importance, had still left open the possibility of irrationalist countermovements; these came to dominate the Restoration period.⁵ The theoretical achievements of the Enlightenment required further development, critique and refinement. Hegel provided the key to these further developments. The political agenda of progressive Hegelian thought was defined by the completion of the Enlightenment programme, and the extension into the state and the practices of citizenship of ideas of autonomy, originally devised by German Idealism. The philosophical debates of the *Vormärz* were immediately implicated in a rapidly changing socio-political environment. The Young Hegelians sought to reflect on these developments, which often induced them to reconsider earlier stances and alliances. Their rapidly evolving thought sought to adapt itself to new circumstances and new adversaries that were spawned by the policies of Restoration Prussia and other German states. Hegel himself had synthesized Enlightenment sources in his own system; his students sought to think them through again, and to give them new expression, often radicalizing Hegel's own express conclusions. In doing so, they examined different senses of personality, criticizing those that were too closely tied to particularistic identities and interests, and stressing the quest for common interests; or they redefined personality as a dialectical syllogism, subjecting given particularity to the critique of universal principles, in order to reach a self-conscious singularity. Spirit

as freedom is the central idea that underpins the Young Hegelian emancipatory project. In confrontation with the increasingly conservative Restoration regime of Frederick William IV of Prussia (1798–1861), this project assumed distinct political shapes: as a proto-socialist affirmation of solidarity in idea of species-being, and the repudiation of possessive individualism by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872); or as a republican rigorism in Bruno Bauer (1809–1882), who stressed the overcoming of particularistic allegiances as a precondition for individual freedom and the rational state.⁶ Throughout the 1840s, the Hegelian School experienced a process of self-criticism and self-clarification, indeed of severe crisis. Ludwig Feuerbach gradually developed a naturalist-existentialist conception of life that emancipated itself from what he termed ‘the [abstract] being of philosophy as distinct from the actual sensuous existence of nature and man’.⁷ Bruno Bauer judged mere political emancipation as insufficient, while still defending his republican commitment up until the revolutions of 1848.⁸

The political bearings of the Young Hegelians’ critical engagement with Hegel can be analysed further by focussing on aspects of the internal crisis which Young Hegelianism underwent between 1843 and 1846. Contrary to what Karl Marx (1818–1883) and other contemporaries claimed, this was not brought about by a downward spiral of philosophical negativity, as if the more ‘nihilistic’ positions developed by some in this period were merely the logical extension of the Hegelian political critiques of 1839–1842.⁹ Rather, a break occurs in the trajectory of Hegelianism, exposing humanistic ideas of political and social emancipation to biting satire and profound repudiation. The internal polemics were compounded by external pressures. By the end of 1843, the most significant organs of Hegelianism, the *Hallische Jahrbücher*, the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*, and the *Rheinische Zeitung*, had to cease publication. The increasingly reactionary Prussian government forced the Young Hegelians to reassess their quest for political emancipation, provoking a further disintegration of an already divided movement.

Stirner’s critique

In 1844, Max Stirner (1806–1856) published his seminal critique of his contemporaries, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Stirner not only scorned all attempts at an immanent critique of Hegel and the Enlightenment, but renounced Young Hegelian emancipatory claims as well. Stressing disengagement, Stirner endorsed a purely particularistic understanding

of freedom (*Eigenheit*). Instead of challenging the given as an inadequate embodiment of rationality, Stirner leaves the given intact by considering it a mere object, not of transformation, but of enjoyment and consumption (*Eigentum*).¹⁰ This position dissociates Stirner firmly from the humanistic Hegelian tradition. By trying to turn his former comrades' arguments against them, Stirner nevertheless offers a unique insight into the issues that aroused vivid debates among the Hegelians of the *Vormärz*. Stirner refused to conceptualize the human self, and rendered it devoid of any reference to rationality or universal standards. The self was moreover considered a field of action, a 'never-being I'.¹¹ The 'I' had no essence to realize and life itself was a process of self-dissolution.¹² His work had far-reaching consequences for the Young Hegelian political projects, both socialist and republican. His contemporaries considered egoism as the ultimate expression of alienation and thus as an obstacle to political struggle and emancipation.¹³ Stirner, however, embraced egoism enthusiastically, while mocking the emancipatory claims of both Feuerbach and Bauer.

If the political implications of Stirner's thought are quietistic insofar as the given is to be merely enjoyed, and the impositions of others (both state authorities and would-be revolutionaries) are to be as far as possible circumvented, his radicalism lies at another level. Far from accepting, like the humanist Hegelians, a construal of subjectivity endowed with a universal and ethical mission, Stirner's notion of 'the Unique' (*Der Einzige*) distances itself from any conceptualization whatsoever: 'There is no development of the concept of the Unique. No philosophical system can be built out of it, as it can out of Being, or Thinking, or the I. Rather, with it, all development of the concept ceases. The person who views it as a principle thinks that he can treat it philosophically or theoretically and necessarily wastes his breath arguing against it'.¹⁴ The result is a radical and anti-cognitivist nominalism at odds with ideas of universality espoused by Hegelians of both republican and socialist stamp.

Stirner's work provoked a particularly acute crisis in Young Hegelian circles. While Feuerbach and Bauer defended their initial stances and further developed their critique of the existing socio-political order in contrasting ways, Marx, it has been argued recently, fundamentally reconsiders his previous conceptions of alienation and species-being under the influence of Stirner's criticisms of essentialism, laying the foundations for his later historical-materialist approach.¹⁵ Among the other effects of Stirner's polemic was to contribute to discrediting the movement as a whole, reducing it for some, such as Karl Schmidt (1819–1864)¹⁶ and

Kuno Fischer (1824–1907),¹⁷ to an object of mere bemusement. Stirner disrupts and deflects the odyssey of Young Hegelianism prior to the revolutions of 1848, challenging its emancipatory aims and its entire philosophical basis.

Humanism and emancipation

The Young Hegelian approach of the early 1840s anticipates humanistic and non-metaphysical readings of Hegel which are increasingly prominent in the contemporary literature, though not always with the same expressly political intent.¹⁸ The need to develop Hegel's thought to confront new, post-Enlightenment adversaries entailed a reconfiguration of the Hegelian system. Foremost in need of clarification are ideas of spirit, as the becoming of rational freedom. The unity of thought and being as it occurs in the medium of *objective* spirit encapsulates the historically developing forms of living and experiencing freedom, as these are manifest in social and political institutions and relations, and in different conceptions of personhood. *Absolute* spirit, erected on this foundation, expresses these evolving historical understandings in artistic depictions, religious representations and philosophical systems. The *Vormärz* Hegelians define spirit as an anthropological and historical project. It evokes a process of emancipation and approximation to clearer ideas of reason and freedom. Its advance is not unilinear, but occurs through contradiction and struggle, with regressions and failures, and without metaphysical guarantees. In this humanist and historical reading, Hegel's doctrine of absolute spirit requires revision, or at least restatement, to eliminate the appearance of transcendence conveyed by some of Hegel's own formulations. Thus spirit must be detached from any notion of a transcendent power, of God acting through us, an idea retained by some on the Hegelian Right. For the Young Hegelians, spirit refers instead to immanent processes of individual and social self-formation in history. Insofar as Hegel seems to sanction elements of transcendence, these must be eliminated; and the grounds for their persistence in Hegel's own thought must be explained, whether by the force of censorship and pragmatic accommodation to the ruling interests, by the specific features of his idealism, or by the intrinsic nature of idealism itself. Bauer,¹⁹ Arnold Ruge (1802–1880)²⁰ and Feuerbach²¹ offer differing accounts of Hegel's apparent failures to draw the full critical implications of his thought, while sharing a common humanistic conception of spirit as historical activity.

Further, the relations among the levels of absolute spirit must be rethought. Here there are two related issues: whether art, religion and philosophy have the same content but merely a different form, as Hegel asserted; and whether the hierarchical ordering of these levels is properly established. In respect to the first issue, the Young Hegelians stress not the identity but the antithesis of philosophy and religion. In combat with Restoration religious orthodoxy, they analyse religion as a form of *alienated* spirit, or spirit unaware of its own activity. The distinction is one of content as well as of form. Secondly, then, religion forfeits its place in the hierarchy of the Absolute, its pre-eminence over art by virtue of its appeal to representational thought, and not to sensuous intuition. As alienated spirit, religious thought is taken to be an obstacle to the unity of thought and being, rather than a positive stage in its development. Art comes to assume a new saliency as a proof of the effectiveness of reason in reshaping the material order, because it was related to the powers of critique and creativity that shaped the external world.²² The reconfiguration of spirit meant that the unity of concept and objectivity could only be attained by a radical transformation of the objective order. Spirit is the description of the historical process itself. Bruno Bauer thus emphasized philosophy's revolutionary potential: 'Philosophy is therefore the critique of the existing: through knowledge, the spirit posits a distinction between knowledge and what is. What is and what should be are distinguished. The *ought*, however, is alone the true, the legitimate, and must be brought to recognition, mastery, and power'.²³ This 'ought' is not a mere moral duty, as in Kant, but expresses the self-actualizing force of reason.²⁴

Freedom and republicanism

Recent research describes the Young Hegelians as contributors to a specific tradition of political theory, attempting to make civic humanism compatible with the demands of modernity and rethinking republican ideas of freedom in the struggle against traditional privileges and hierarchy, but also against newly-emergent forms of economic inequality and exclusion. They stress Hegel's view of the duality of modernity: as a culture of diremption, alienation and stubbornly opposed interests, but also as the source of unprecedented emancipatory possibilities, and new forms of solidarity compatible with social and economic differentiation and subjective rights.²⁵ Recognizing modern social diversity and the division of labour, the humanist Young Hegelians resist the ideal of

a homogeneous citizen body frequently associated with earlier republicanism.²⁶ They understand the 'social question', the emergence of new forms of urban poverty and exclusion linked to incipient manufacture and industry, as a decisive contradiction to which the modern state must attend, and they problematize the relations of the state and civil society as sites for the practice of freedom. The republican themes of self-rule and resistance to domination recur with a Kantian inflection, whereby self-mastery is equated with autonomy, and arbitrary power with heteronomy.²⁷

The central idea of this refurbished civic humanism is the concept of autonomy, an application and concretization of Kantian practical reason. The practice of autonomy means the defence of an idea of universal interests against the effects of growing fragmentation and particularization entailed in the modern division of labour. The Young Hegelians distinguish diversity old and new. The old, pre-Revolutionary regime of estates was characterized by inequality of status and differential rights, conceived as exemptions or immunities from taxes, services or other forms of political exaction.²⁸ This estate order is irredeemable bankrupt, and the Young Hegelians reject the attempts by their Romantic and Restoration contemporaries to revive or vindicate elements of it.²⁹ On the other hand, the Hegelians recognize the ineliminable fact of diversity and particular interests spawned by the new division of labour. Virtue and commerce are now opposed on a new basis.³⁰ Whereas in the eighteenth century, virtue had often been a code word to denote the superiority of agrarian over commercial interests, it now applied to those engaged in modern civil and industrial society, summoning them to criticize their particular interests from the point of view of the common good and social progress. Class and sectional interests were sources of heteronomy, to be held in check by republican virtue and autonomous self-determination which was the essence of citizenship. In this way republican ideas of freedom were extended to economic as well as political questions, delineating a specifically Hegelian republicanism in 1848. This position reflects the emergent features of modern civil society, while critically appropriating themes from Kantian as well as Hegelian idealism. The attack upon privilege and hierarchy, the challenge to monarchical sovereignty, and the achievement of a 'republic of self-consciousness' based on popular self-rule and universal interests, animated the works of Bruno Bauer and of Arnold Ruge (1802–1880).

Ludwig Feuerbach also criticized the alienating and isolating egoism of modern social life; his position rapidly evolved into a critique of Hegel, and of philosophical idealism in general, as implicated in the

modern fragmentation of experience. According to Feuerbach, idealism wrongly privileged the head over the heart, and reversed the natural priority of being (including the holistic, sensuous being of men and women) over thought. Like religion, idealist philosophy is guilty of hypostatizing, deforming and isolating human species-attributes. Thus, thought, as an apparently self-determining process, becomes separated from thinking human beings and seems to determine them. The proper relation of subject (thinking subjects) and predicate (their thoughts) is upended. The universal powers which belong to the human species must be reclaimed from their religious projections and political arrogations, and must be experienced anew in concrete communities living in mutual solidarity and harmony with nature. Despite their deep philosophical differences, Bauer and Feuerbach are at one in recognizing such universal powers. The concepts of universality and autonomy are the hallmarks of their humanism.

In *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, in stark contrast, Max Stirner rejects any notion of universality as intrinsically alienating. He asserts that the humanistic project of realizing reason in history meant the annulment of the real individual, the subordination of the concrete self to universalistic imperatives of various kinds. Stirner renounces the humanist and Hegelian notion of rational freedom, replacing it with his conception of 'ownness' (*Eigenheit*), which stresses non-essentialist particularism, anti-universalism, and immediate interests and satisfactions. The theoretical and the political fracturing of the Young Hegelian School have their grounds in these disputes.

Humanism and 'anti-humanism'

The writings of Gans, Strauss, Feuerbach, Ruge, Bauer and the young Marx (1818–1883) present a humanist transformation of Hegelian metaphysics, which became a rallying cry for political and social revolution. Young Hegelianism in the 1840s was a quest to identify a modern political subject, whose concrete activity could be understood in relation to natural or evolving historical-cultural needs, and whose emancipation required fundamental changes in social and political relationships.

Feuerbach's humanism considered the relation between the finite individual and the infinite potentiality of the species. Emancipation involved reclaiming as human attributes the predicates projected onto divinity by the alienated religious consciousness. As long as the universality of human species-being was conceived as the property of

a transcendent personal god, rather than as a characteristic of earthly social life, mankind would fall victim to a suffocating egoism.³¹ Human essence was an objective reality realized within inter-subjective relations. Feuerbach's criticism was thus tied to a communitarian line of thought and considered the isolated relation between persons and their property to be 'egoistic'. In Feuerbach's solution, the individual tends to be assimilated to the generic, to be immersed in species-being. The more individualist and historically-minded Bruno Bauer, however, considered the universal to be the immanent history of self-consciousness, in which individuals acquire the discipline of rational freedom, subjecting their immediate particular interests to critique, and repudiating their attachments to alienated or merely given forms of life.³² Bauer linked religious egoism to economic egoism, both opposed to the true universality of self-consciousness. The egoism that Bauer ascribed to Judaism and Christianity also characterized both liberalism and socialism. According to Bauer, true singularity or individuality was autonomous since it had cast aside the fixity and rigidity of particularism. Singularity represents freedom as a universality that disciplines and restricts the particular. In the dialectic of infinite self-consciousness, the universal acquires objectivity by incorporating the particular as an aspect of itself, while the particular elevates itself and becomes the expression of a higher principle. Bauer applies to politics the standards of Kantian ethical thought, demanding adhesion to universal maxims in political life. Autonomy is the central notion of Bauer's humanism. Subjects could only attain genuine universality by freeing themselves from particular interests, from transcendent pseudo-universals like the absolutist state and religious dogma, and from reigning institutions that claimed independence from self-consciousness.³³

In characterizing his differences with Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer argues that after Hegel, his system splits along its two constitutive axes, the Fichtean and the Spinozist, which Hegel himself had attempted to integrate.³⁴ Bauer pursues the Fichtean route, stressing the active, self-transforming individual, who attains autonomy through the conscious, *personal* enactment of universal interests.³⁵ The universal interest, the interest in the progress of rational freedom and in emancipation from institutions which have historically forfeited their legitimacy, is not simply a shared property, as in Feuerbach's account, but must be taken up or posited by individuals as having normative status, directing their actions. Autonomy is a property of the will which is able to discipline itself under self-legislated universal rules. On Bauer's reading, the

alternate, Spinozist approach is followed by D.F. Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach. It retains a notion of universality, but as an essentially passive and distributive property, as community or shared interests, while failing to acknowledge the centrality of individual willing and self-legislation. In Feuerbach and Karl Marx, the universal appears as collective species-being, subverted by particularism and egoistic activities, but redeemable through changes in social relationships. While both camps stress the importance of universality, a general will which transcends immediate interests and desires,³⁶ they differ profoundly in how this universal is expressed, and operate with distinct concepts of the person. The differences within this current point to an unresolved tension between freedom and solidarity, more generally definitive of modernity itself. This Hegel acknowledges when he describes the modern world as a culture of diremption.³⁷ Among the *Vormärz* Hegelians, the problem achieves a particularly acute formulation, manifesting itself in a political split between republican and socialist tendencies.

Max Stirner, on the other hand, repudiates both these routes to emancipation, and the entire Hegelian legacy of rational freedom. Rejecting universality, Stirner's 'anti-humanism' marks a major departure from the emancipatory projects of his contemporaries. To them, the human being, as a socio-political subject, acted under self-given imperatives, of an ethical or historical nature, in order to realize the conditions of emancipation. Disclaiming any such imperatives, Stirner's radicalism is merely apparent, as it endorses a purely particularistic understanding of freedom with no transformative aims.

While *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* targets primarily Bauer's philosophy of self-consciousness, and offers Stirner's fullest criticism of this position,³⁸ it is useful to turn to his earlier reviews of Bauer's *Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts* and of *Hegel's Lehre von der Religion und Kunst* as important documents of Stirner's intellectual evolution. This examination will require a level of detail greater than the foregoing recapitulations of Bauer and Feuerbach. Very few scholars have studied these texts by one of Bauer's closest acquaintances among the Young Hegelians. The literature on Stirner, if it even mentions these texts, merely interprets them as a bridge between Hegel and Stirner's alleged radicalization of Bauer's philosophy of self-consciousness.³⁹ A study of these texts, however, casts into doubt the idea that Stirner represents a further development of Bauer's own position. What is at stake is rather a fundamental rift in the Hegelian School, opening over questions of emancipation and subjectivity. Stirner ironized Bauer's Hegelianism and mocked

any attempt at revitalizing (Hegelian) philosophy as a whole. He undermined the subject-object dichotomy, which he took as fundamental to the Hegelian project, through his notion of 'egoism' (an act of appropriating the objective and consuming or destroying it within oneself). This marks a fundamental departure from Bauer, and not a continuation of his thought.

Stirner began publishing his first philosophical articles in 1842, and his initial stands were heavily influenced by Bauer. His review of Bauer's *Posaune* enthusiastically supported the latter's radicalizing reading of Hegel as an 'atheist' and 'anti-Christ'.⁴⁰ Stirner endorsed this view, turning Hegel into a weapon to confront 'egoism' head-on.⁴¹ Particularly Bauerian is Stirner's focus on both a 'small' and 'big' war against 'egoism'. On Stirner's rendering, the 'small war' was waged against the concept of egoism itself, whereas the 'big war' opposed everything objective related to it: religion and the state. However, a mere five months later, Stirner's critique of Bauer's *Hegel's Lehre* represented a full frontal assault upon Bauer's philosophy as a whole.

It is hard to discern the causes of Stirner's sudden shift of allegiance.⁴² In any case, he begins to lay out criticisms of Bauer that he will elaborate in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Stirner returns to Hegel's trinity of Art-Religion-Philosophy in order to attack Bauer's criticism of religion and his entire philosophical position, which tried to reconcile thought and being through a new kind of 'Ought', a historical imperative of emancipation. Stirner attacked Bauer by claiming that art gave birth to religion by 'satisfying the urge of some men to split themselves up (*Entzweiung*) between that which they are and that which they should become' – Stirner's ironic use of Hegel's unhappy consciousness.⁴³ By satisfying man's 'urge', and thus completing the unhappy consciousness, art created an object of worship for religion.⁴⁴ Man was henceforth confronted with an object, which he tried to integrate within himself, but failed to do.⁴⁵ Bauer, on the other hand, had claimed that art was much more closely related to philosophy based on their shared determinacy and clarity, and a common *ethical* root.⁴⁶ Stirner, however, asserted that art rather created an object for religion and could thus by no means be related to what he considered in opposition with Hegel and Bauer to be 'philosophy':

It [philosophy] neither stands opposed to an Object, as religion, nor makes one, as art, but rather places its pulverizing hand upon all the business of making Objects as well as the whole of objectivity itself,

and so breathes the air of *freedom*. Reason, the spirit of philosophy, concerns itself only with itself, and troubles itself over no Object.⁴⁷

Stirner left philosophy out of the dialectical triad (Art-Religion-Philosophy), by claiming that philosophy ‘doesn’t bother itself with objects’ (religion), nor does it ‘make an object’ (art). It was religion *itself* that ‘makes the object empty’ (through ‘reflection’: *Verstandesdenken*), and when it was empty, art reclaimed its object by ‘showing’, first, that the object was in fact empty (by turning religion into a ‘ridiculous comedy’) and, secondly, that ‘man’ should no longer hold to it. In doing so art shook off its ‘alienation’ (religion had alienated art from its object) and could now create a new object.⁴⁸

Some of the differences between Bauer and Stirner come to the fore in the notion of ‘critique’ in Bauer’s philosophy. Contrary to merely dismissive Enlightenment critiques of religion, for instance, Bauer considered religion fundamental to an understanding of the development of reason throughout history. It was an integrated part of his critical theory. Critique explains why alienation occurs as the form of both rigid particularism and a hypostasized universal. It was criticism’s explicit task to free philosophy from its limitations, which were in part bestowed upon it by religious modes of thought. Stirner identifies this idea of ‘criticism’, and its problematic relation with religion, as Bauer’s *primum mobile*. By claiming that philosophy ‘doesn’t bother itself with objects’, Stirner tries to ridicule Bauer’s attempt at wresting a criticism of religion out of Hegel, by applying Hegel’s notion of the unhappy consciousness to both art and religion, and by equating Bauer’s philosophy of self-consciousness to religion. In doing so, Stirner sets the stage for his political and societal disengagement in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. The overarching principle is his replacement of criticism as a mode of argument by mere irony. Rather than attempting a rational internal critique, Stirner merely tries to turn his adversaries’ arguments against them while leaving – in his own words – the *Logos* (word) behind. This is a leave-taking from rationalist philosophy and its principle of autonomy, and hence a break with Hegelian humanism.

Stirner claims that Bauer remained trapped between art and religion; he endlessly created and destroyed religion, only to recreate it anew. ‘Philosophy’, on the other hand, was something completely different for Stirner. It did not concern itself with ‘objects’ and therefore literally remained ‘indifferent’ to religion or ‘God’, which was ‘nothing but a stone’ to it.⁴⁹ By reconciling thought and being *in thought*, Bauer only

tried to solve a problem which he himself had created, by opening a divide (*Entzweiung*/diremption) between subject and object (thus generating the unhappy consciousness). Stirner's definition of 'philosophy' implied that his Young Hegelian contemporaries, and Bauer in particular, were as religious as the 'object' they tried to criticize; they merely created the diremption which they sought to sublate. This argument in essence contains views that Stirner was to elaborate in *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. *Kunst und Religion* contained Stirner's criticism of Bauer's 'universal self-consciousness' as it took shape around 1842, while *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* attacked its political dimensions and emancipatory claims.⁵⁰ *Der Einzige* is Stirner's parody of the Young Hegelian quest to identify a modern political subject. Stirner's alleged philosophy of egoism should not be read as a new philosophy of the subject, but rather as an attempt to beat Bauer with his own weapons by touching what had become the very heart of his emancipatory project around 1843: his criticism of egoism and particularism as a fully integrated part of his philosophy of self-consciousness.⁵¹

Developing the legacy of German Idealism, Bauer equated philosophy with immanent critique. Stirner claims that Bauer had gradually expanded his 'criticism' to the state itself, which according to Stirner implied that Bauer 'sees the inhuman everywhere' except 'in his own head'. In spite of his shift, however, Bauer still clung to his humanism and his critique of egoism and therefore never changed any of his 'presuppositions':

It may now, to conclude with this, be clear that in the critic's new change of front he has not transformed himself, but only 'made good an oversight', 'disentangled a subject', and is saying too much when he speaks of 'criticism criticizing itself'; it, or rather he, has only criticized its 'oversight' and cleared it of its 'inconsistencies'. If he wanted to criticize criticism, he would have to look and see if there was anything in its presupposition.⁵²

Stirner's postscript to *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* contains the clearest expression of his criticism of Bauer and of philosophy itself:

So he [Bauer] wants to break up thoughts by thinking; but I say, only thoughtlessness really saves me from thoughts. It is not thinking, but my thoughtlessness, or I the unthinkable, incomprehensible, that frees me from possession.⁵³

Stirner claims that Bauer's 'self-criticism' remains trapped in its own constructions, merely drawing the logical conclusions of his humanism. Stirner's own 'anti-humanism' was the outcome of his notion of 'ownness' (*Eigenheit*) as opposed to the Hegelian notion of 'freedom', and is therefore immediately implicated in his attempts at ridiculing both progressive interpretations of Hegel and their political bearings. Stirner describes his self, *Der Einzige*, as neither a subject nor an object; it eludes all conceptual determination, it is a 'never-being I'.⁵⁴ Its wants are nonetheless immediately valid, and require no rational critique or justification. And yet these wants may fluctuate and change at any moment; the self must not be bound to its past, nor to any future transformative project. Its ever-morphing 'ownness' is the *ius uti et abutendi* of the world, of anything that comes within the power of the self.

In his response to *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, Bauer defends his philosophy of self-consciousness against Stirner's attacks, and, in turn, connects Stirner to Feuerbach's Spinozistic reading of Hegel.⁵⁵ Bauer focuses on Stirner's parody of the *Vergegenständlichungsdiagnostik* ('egoism-ownness'), rigorously defending his own philosophy of self-consciousness, and its political and social dimensions. Bauer's claim is that Stirner never attains the standpoint of subjectivity at all, but remains mired in substantiality, fixity, and lack of critical self-awareness.

How can the true standpoint of subjectivity be characterized? Bauer's historical humanism views emancipation as a result of historical struggles, of subjects' own deeds. Subjectivity is not only direct self-awareness, but contains universality, as the record of shared commitments and values, and of the general interests that bind the self-legislating individuals who posit them. Bauer, echoing Fichte, insists that the relation of thought and being is not a pre-established harmony, but must be achieved by subjective activity, both moulding the self and transforming the external world. The ethical bonds among individuals, and the institutions which express them, are products of self-consciousness, of the creative work of individuals and their strivings for rational freedom.

So conceived, ethical life is sustained and changed by struggle and subjective insight. On this reading, the Spinozism of Feuerbach consists in his failure to understand spontaneous formative action. The universal he upholds is merely distributive; individuals are reduced to its passive *bearers*, not grasped as its active, conscious *agents*. Against this Spinozistic view, Max Stirner appears, like Bauer, to stress the individual, rather than the generic and collective, placing Stirner on the Fichtean side of the divide within Hegelianism. Yet this appearance is deceptive: in their

defence of a principle of universality, Bauer and Feuerbach share the same humanist terrain, from which Stirner distances himself in his anti-humanist polemic.

It would, however, be quite misleading to assume that Stirner merely replaced 'man' with 'I'. Stirner himself compares his own idea of the self to Fichte's: 'When Fichte says, "The I is all," this seems to harmonize perfectly with my thesis'. However, Stirner goes on to contend: 'But it is not that the I is all, but the I destroys all, and only the self-dissolving I, the never-being I, the – finite I is really I. Fichte speaks of the "absolute" I, but I speak of me, the transitory I'. *Eigentum* (i.e. the world) was dissolved (*aufgelöst*) in the transitory 'I', and nothing, no (ethical) result, was elevated to a higher plane and secured. In opposition to Bauer's critical thought, we are left with no form of development whatsoever.⁵⁶ Development implies a *telos*; *Auflösung* means that nothing stands above the individual and that all fixed ideas are to be dissolved, since life itself was a process of 'self-dissolution'. Dissolution itself was no destiny or end, since it was part of the here and now.⁵⁷ Stirner explicitly referred to Bauer's own statement that 'property' was not to become 'stable' and that it should be the object of constant 'dissolution'. However, Bauer's criticism was part of a process through which concrete 'man' became universal or generic 'man'.⁵⁸ Whereas Bauer sees freedom as self-transformation in light of universal purposes, not as immediate gratification or self-assertion,⁵⁹ Stirner stands for a non-essentialist particularism, viewing any putative universal as a transcendent power holding *Der Einzige's* drive to (self-)dissolution in thrall.

Conclusion: Stirner's radical break from Hegelianism

Thus Stirner's Fichtean activism, too, is merely apparent. When Bauer instead treats Stirner as a Spinozist, reducing subjectivity to substance, his criticism is distinct from that of the passivity of the Feuerbachian self. He takes aim at the Stirnerian *Einziger* as characterized by thing-like fixity, givenness, and imperviousness to criticism, i.e. by the lack of *universality*. Contrasting his own idea of the self-determining personality to Stirner's, Bauer indicts the principle of *ownness* as exempting a privileged region of selfhood from critique, as affirming a pure, unexamined particularity.⁶⁰ Such a self claims as its privilege immunity to challenge and rational critique. Bauer describes such stubborn affirmation of the self as Spinoza's substance at its most abstract, the bare thought of selfhood (as Hegel had affirmed of Spinoza's substance, a 'simple equality with itself'⁶¹). But such selves,

Bauer claims, are not yet *subjects*. They lack precisely the capacity to distance themselves from their particular desires and to subject these to rational evaluation.

Not only is Stirner content with the merely particularistic self that eludes conceptualization, but he places it in problematic relation to the external world. Stirner depicts the *Einziger* as ineffable in his acts, maintaining an ironic detachment toward them,⁶² and simply appropriating and consuming external objects, rather than seeking expression through them.⁶³ Over-commitment to one's own deeds is enslaving: objects become fetishes, 'spooks', possessing the self and limiting its 'ownness' or its drive to (self-)dissolution. This is a version of the bare subjectivity of which Bauer spoke critically in his first text, *De pulchri principiis* of 1829;⁶⁴ it contrasts with the authentic subjectivity which realizes itself in its acts, which finds itself concretely present in its deeds, its reason manifest in the objective world. Because the Stirnerian self does not expose itself to the fire of criticism, it is static and immobile, despite its flurry of external activity. And all things are nothing to it.

The debate between Bauer and Stirner, although provoking a profound internal crisis in the Young Hegelian movement, also illuminates the Young Hegelian agenda: freedom and humanism as a rallying cry for social and political transformation, against which Stirner's anti-humanist position stands as particularist and ahistorical. Despite his overtly provocative and seemingly radical stance, Stirner cedes to the given as immediately valid. The objective world is a matter for consumption, not transformation, and individuals are in any case disengaged from it in their solitude. Consequently, the task of criticizing the diremptive forces of modernity, developing the heritage of the Enlightenment and Hegel, remains with the humanist thinkers in the Hegelian School. The economic and religious particularisms which they targeted have not abated since their time, and continue to define modernity as a world of fragmentation and alienation. The free and infinite personality, the humanist and Hegelian ideal of rational self-determination in culture, economics and politics, remains a project in need of completion.

Notes

1. PR (N), Introduction, 20.
2. Stewart (2011), 66–96.
3. For example: Taillandier (1847), 238–268. *De Tijdspiegel* [anonymous] (1847), 481–492.

4. Moggach (2006).
5. Toews (2004), 54–56.
6. Moggach (2006), 114–135.
7. Feuerbach [1846] (1973), 188.
8. Moggach (2003), 139–157, 157–180.
9. On Stirner's 'absolute negativity': Marx [1845–46] (1962); Fischer (1847); Paterson (1971).
10. De Ridder (2008), 285–297.
11. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 199, Stirner [1844] (2000b), 163.
12. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 373, Stirner [1844] (2000b), 294.
13. Feuerbach [1841] (1973), 208–214, Bauer (1842), 127.
14. Stirner [1845] (1986a), 150.
15. Thomson (2004), 120–157.
16. Schmidt [anonymous] (1846); Schmidt [Pseud. K. Bürger] (1846).
17. Fischer (1847).
18. See for example Deligiorgi (2006), and, in the same volume, critical comments on non-metaphysical readings by Rolf-Peter Horstmann (2006, 69–84).
19. Bauer (1841), 537–558.
20. Ruge [1840] [1842], (1972), 598–623, 624–649.
21. Feuerbach [1839] (1970), 16–62.
22. Bauer [Anonymous] (1842).
23. Bauer [Anonymous] (1841), 82.
24. Moggach (2001–2002), 1–24.
25. PR (N), Introduction, 20 and §260, cf. Moggach (2011).
26. E.g. Maza (2002), 106–123.
27. For discussion of a precursor of these views, see Beiser (2005), 124–125, 163–164; Moggach (2008), 16–36.
28. Tomba (2006), 91–113.
29. Collenberg (2011), 203–230.
30. Hont/Ignatieff (1983).
31. Breckman (1998), 99–107.
32. Moggach (2003), 40–46.
33. Moggach (2003), 33. This is not to claim that Bauer's project is theoretically successful. On the tensions between internal and external emancipation in Bauer, see Moggach (2006).
34. Bauer [anonymous] (1845), 86–146. On this text, see Moggach (2009–2010), 63–86.
35. Cf. PR §5–7.
36. This position is treated in much greater detail in Moggach (2009–2010), 61–84.
37. Aesth. I, 522, 530.
38. De Ridder (2008), 285–297.
39. Stepelevich (1983), 327–334.
40. Stirner [1842] (1986b), 59–74.
41. 'Hegel, who would and has elevated the human spirit into the all-powerful Spirit, and has impressed this teaching upon his students that no one has to seek salvation outside of or beyond themselves, but rather are each their own Savior and Deliverer, has never made it his particular task to lead a so-called

- “small war” and to hack out of its fortress the egoism which in a thousand fold forms blocks the liberation of individuals.’ Max Stirner [1842] (1986b), 63 [our translation].
42. John Henry Mackay and Ernst Barnikol suggest that Bauer and Stirner were caught up in a dispute over a joint project, probably *Das entdeckte Christentum*. Stirner eventually refused to collaborate with Bauer in 1843. It is however uncertain what triggered this dispute and when it started. Barnikol (1927), 38–39.
 43. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 99.
 44. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 100.
 45. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 101.
 46. Moggach (2003) 37; Bauer [anonymous] (1842), 197.
 47. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 110.
 48. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 108.
 49. Stirner [1842] (1986c), 110.
 50. This helps to explain why Stirner continued to criticize ‘egoism’ in another article just before *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, and claims that it is in fact opposed to ‘self-determination’. See: Stirner’s *Einiges Vorläufige vom Liebesstaat*, published in 1843, just before *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (Stirner [1843] (1986d), 123–126).
 51. For an analysis of Stirner’s criticism of Bauer see De Ridder (2008).
 52. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 167; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 134–136.
 53. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 164; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 132–133. On the ‘unthinkable’ as a concept used to criticize Hegel, see also Jonas on Adorno (this volume).
 54. This might be very confusing to an English speaking audience who read ‘Der Einzige’ as an ‘ego’. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 163–164; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 131–132.
 55. Bauer [anonymous] (1845), 94–106.
 56. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 167; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 134–135.
 57. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 373; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 294.
 58. Stirner [1844] (2000a), 157; Stirner [1844] (2000b), 127.
 59. Moggach (2003), 114–35.
 60. Tomba (2006), 91–113.
 61. Hist., 257.
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5

Hegelianism in Denmark

George Pattison

Introduction

The history of Hegelianism in Denmark would scarcely have drawn the attention of the rest of the world were it not for the attack on Hegel and all his works by one single individual: Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). This attack would earn Kierkegaard the reputation of being dissimilarly twinned with Marx as one of the two most significant not to say epochal critics of Hegel in the post-Hegelian generation. Both could be said to agree on Hegel's idealism leading to a neglect of the concrete historical reality of human life, but whereas the one interprets this historical reality in terms of social and economic conditions, the other interprets it in relation to the individual's existential concern for the meaning of his or her unique life and death. Equally, it could be said that Kierkegaard's own significance for the history of ideas was, for much of the twentieth century, intertwined with his attack on Hegel and that this tended to put other aspects of his work in the shade. It is not to the purpose of this chapter to address other aspects of Kierkegaard's work, merely to flag that he should not be reduced to the role of a critical reader of Hegel. It is, however, relevant to look beyond Kierkegaard himself and to see how his attack related to the wider context of the Danish reception of Hegel's thought. Therefore, this chapter falls into three sections. In the first, I examine some of the main features of Kierkegaard's attack, which will be largely familiar, if only secondhand, to many readers. In the second, I examine other relevant aspects of Danish Hegelianism and its place in Danish bourgeois culture before, in the third, returning to reappraise Kierkegaard's attack in the light of these specific local circumstances.

Kierkegaard vs. Hegel

Several of the best-known features of Kierkegaard's attack on Hegel are found in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*¹, where he takes issue with some of the basic assumptions of Hegelian thought. Especially important are the points he makes in connection with what he calls the dialectic of the beginning and the relationship between logic and empirical reality. On Kierkegaard's account, Hegel 'begins' by an act of total abstraction that yields a category of pure immediacy or pure being and from there proceeds to 'deduce' the whole system of logical categories that, in turn, are projected onto and realized in the development of life itself.²

Kierkegaard objects that this procedure is flawed at several key points. First, Hegel ignores the role of the *act* of abstracting, i.e., that the philosopher must voluntarily choose to begin philosophizing and that even logic itself has an existential background in the intentional life of the logician. In this regard Kierkegaard appears to approve the biographical preamble of Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, in which we get to see – properly in Kierkegaard's view – something of the philosopher himself. Second, he argues that doubt itself – versus both Descartes and, presumably, the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* – can never yield a positive content, and that something like a Schellingian intellectual intuition provides a better starting point than a supposedly total act of abstraction that then supposedly generates a positive content. Third, and in connection with this, Hegel makes a further error – or commits a further false move – when he deduces the category of 'movement' from the initial pairing of Being and Nothing. Here Kierkegaard specifically allies himself to the contemporary German Aristotelian and logician Adolf Trendelenburg (1802–1872), arguing that movement has no place in logic and that its introduction there reflects a surreptitious 'smuggling in' of something the philosopher is actually already acquainted with on other, non-logical grounds (such as empirical experience).³ Fourth, not only is the system flawed in its beginning, but it is also unable to deliver on the totality that it promises – precisely because all it can ever give is an abstract modelling of reality and not the thing itself. The reality of active, suffering human life cannot be included in it. Thus, Kierkegaard argues that while a logical system is possible, in the sense of a self-contained system of logical relations that makes no claim to apply to any reality external to itself, an existential system is impossible. At least, an existential system might be possible for God, but not for existing human beings, limited by their finite temporal and local situatedness. For us, there is no view from nowhere. The system's view *sub specie aeternitatis* is possible only for a

being that is itself eternal. Fifth, this particular criticism finds a further deepening in Kierkegaard's particular focus on the question of time and his assertion that, because human existence is temporal, it can never be seen as a whole from the point of view of the existing individual. We are always, as it were, *in media res*, midway upon life's course, always having to confront the prospect of a death that is not death in general but a death that will be uniquely mine and will be the death of me myself, 'I'. But this also suggests that the meaning of our lives as a whole will depend on the actual free choices that we make 'in the meantime', here and now. We are ourselves responsible in our actions and in the manner of our suffering for who we are in the way of becoming. By choosing to ignore this, the Hegelian perspective also has the result of robbing life of its ethical seriousness. Sixth, and in this regard, Hegelianism marks the culminating point of the what Kierkegaard calls the German way of philosophizing, a way that is fundamentally alien to the original impetus of philosophy in the ancient world, since the Greeks (and, for Kierkegaard, that always primarily though not exclusively meant Socrates) never forgot what it meant to be an existing human being.⁴

Now although each of these points could be debated in a purely conventional philosophical way (and, as we have noted, some of them were taken – with acknowledgement – from Trendelenburg), what makes Kierkegaard's case so memorable is that he presents it in a manner that combines philosophy, satire, irony, humour, rhapsody and serious religious meditation. The speculative thinker is not only taken apart as a philosopher, but his very existence as a philosopher is lampooned as a kind of continuous state of self-forgetfulness. He is a fantastical figure who has confused himself with humanity in general, and whose frequent resort to world-historical perspectives merely underlines this basic confusion. 'In the system and in the fifth act of the drama, one has a positive conclusion speculatively-fantastically and esthetically-fantastically, but such a conclusiveness is only for fantastical beings', Kierkegaard observes.⁵ Only on the moon might the system find its true readers, because it is inaccessible to tellurian individuals such as we are.

Kierkegaard is very aware that if Hegel is wrong about how to do philosophy, if it is not objectivity but subjectivity that is the primary measure of truth (at least in the moral and religious spheres), then a whole new style of philosophizing or of critiquing philosophy has to be created – and this is what he does. Thus his series of pseudonymous books show as it were, philosophy in action, as the always partial, perspectival views of particular authors, and never a final, all-encompassing system.

Kierkegaard and the Danish Hegelians

In his *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*, Jon Stewart has argued that many of these criticisms are not really directed at Hegel at all but at one or other of his Danish contemporaries, chiefly the dramatist and aesthetician Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860) and the theologian Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–1884).⁶

There is no doubt that each of these men played an important role in Kierkegaard's own intellectual development, although there is, I think, the significant difference that for a time Kierkegaard clearly aspired to be taken up into Heiberg's literary circle, while he seems from the beginning to have had a certain antipathy towards Martensen, whom he first encountered as a university tutor, hiring him to work through Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* (English title: *The Christian Faith*).⁷ However, the evidence suggests that Kierkegaard was kept firmly at the margins of the Heiberg set (at least in terms of his own perception of his right to an entrée), while Martensen's early success seems especially to have irritated him (again probably in relation to his own perception of their relative intellectual abilities). Stewart is clearly correct in asserting that much of the vehemence of Kierkegaard's polemical stance vis-à-vis Hegelianism is also tied up with his relations to Heiberg and Martensen, his sense of having been side-lined by the one and his sibling rivalry with the other. Particular passages in the *Postscript* and other works can be tied directly to one or other of these two, as when Kierkegaard lampoons Heiberg's own account of his sudden conversion to Hegelianism in the Hamburg Hotel *The King of England* en route back to Denmark from Berlin. There he had heard Hegel lecture, met with him and even been given a pound of pipe-tobacco by the Master. Heiberg appears lightly disguised as Dr Hjortespring, a name that incorporates the Danish term 'spring' usually translated 'leap' and polemically linked by Kierkegaard to the way in which the system requires an unacknowledged, extra-logical 'leap' in order to begin. As Kierkegaard comments on Heiberg/Hjortespring's account of this conversion, it seems an odd way to commit to a philosophy that excludes sudden revelations and demands the labour of dialectical logic.⁸

However, I do not think these personal factors undermine the case that, in the end, Kierkegaard is making substantial objections to actual features of Hegelianism. Even in the cases of Heiberg and Martensen, his objections are intellectual as well as personal.

Therefore, I now say something briefly about these two figures and illustrate how their particular versions of Hegelianism fed into Kierkegaard's

intellectual development, before making some comments on his own early engagement with Hegelianism and why it mattered to him.

J. L. Heiberg was a genuinely remarkable figure.⁹ Primarily a man of letters, Heiberg would become director of the Theatre Royal in Copenhagen, Denmark's leading literary theorist and critic, a prolific dramatist and translator. He was also married to the Theatre's leading lady (to whom Kierkegaard would dedicate a laudatory essay on the art of acting), whilst his mother wrote a series of popular novels collectively entitled *Tales of Everyday Life*, the subject of an extensive and positive review by Kierkegaard that he published as a book and which contained a section, 'The Present Age', that has frequently been published independently in translation because of its brilliant, if one-sided analysis of the decadence of the modern world.¹⁰

Heiberg's previously mentioned conversion to Hegelianism occurred in 1824, when he was teaching Danish language and literature at the University of Kiel (then part of the wider Danish Kingdom). Its first philosophical expression was a short book, *On Human Freedom*. In the following years, Heiberg both used his new philosophical perspective to articulate a complex aesthetic taxonomy, he also produced works such as the highly technical *Introduction to Speculative Logic*¹¹ as well as more popular works such as *The Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*¹² and backing a number of journals that aimed to promote the new philosophy (e.g., *Perseus: A Journal for the Speculative Idea*). Yet Heiberg's Hegelianism was in some ways rather eccentric. His taxonomy of aesthetic forms is very different from that of Hegel himself, so that whereas Hegel moves from the epic to lyric and on to the dramatic, Heiberg begins with the lyric. This may seem an insignificant point, but it is indicative that where Hegel allows himself to be led by the historical development, Heiberg typically argues in a more deductive way. But there is another, key difference, that whereas Hegel eschews using the philosophy of art to make judgments on actual works of art, distinguishing between philosophy and criticism in the narrow sense, Heiberg's distinctive aim is precisely to 'apply' Hegelianism in such a way as to yield a critical formula and to guide his own artistic practice. Thus, his taxonomy of aesthetic forms culminates in what he calls 'vaudeville', musical comedies set in the contemporary world, in which the lyric and epic, musical and plastic elements are fused in perfect synthesis. He even floated the idea of a 'speculative comedy' that would portray in dramatic form the process of dialectical synthesis. Tellingly, his main effort in this direction was performed for the King's birthday in 1838, underlining the point that the consummation of aesthetic

form was to reflect the perfect synthesis of all social elements in the life of the monarchical society.¹³ This is a very different ending to the story of art from that found in Hegel's own aesthetics, in which drama passes over into the prose of everyday life. Outside aesthetics Heiberg also contributed to the debate about the law of the excluded middle, sparked by Hegelian logic and the reaction to it of leading Danish defenders of Aristotelian principles. This debate also had a religious edge, because it played into the question concerning relations between the divine and the human and whether the unity of the divine and human could be thought in and through the laws of reason. In this regard, it should be said, while Heiberg's principles could be seen to have clear theological outcomes, he was not himself very much interested in religious questions.¹⁴

This was not, of course, true of the theologian and later Bishop H. L. Martensen.¹⁵ Martensen, after an extensive tour of Germany, made what could be regarded as a phenomenal debut when he returned to Denmark and, in 1837 and 1838, held a series of lectures, on some of which Kierkegaard took notes, which really initiated a craze for Hegelian terminology and ways of thinking amongst the students – Hegelian or, as it was then mostly referred to, 'speculative' thinking. In this regard, Martensen belonged squarely within the larger movement of Right Hegelianism and its ambition of solving perennial problems in the philosophy of religion by using dialectical logic to map the progression of the religious consciousness in individual life and in history. The hope was this would yield a phenomenology of religion in which the interdependence and necessity of the successive dominant forms of religiosity would reveal their ontological ground in the basic God-relationship that determined all human existence as such. However, like other speculative theologians, it is fair to say that Martensen always had a certain reserve vis-à-vis full-blooded Hegelianism. This reserve had to do with the personal nature of God and the category of 'holiness'. After his Hegelian beginning, and whilst continuing to affirm the 'speculative' dimension of theology, Martensen progressively toned down the more specifically Hegelian elements in his thought, in which, e.g., such sources as Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–1327) and Jakob Boehme (1575–1624) also played a significant role. Although it is often said of Kierkegaard that his late discovery in the English-speaking world was due to his having written in Danish, several of Martensen's works were translated into English in his own lifetime and a blurb published by T. & T. Clark referred to him as possibly Lutheranism's most significant theologian of the century.

Kierkegaard's critical response to Danish Hegelianism

How, then, did Kierkegaard relate to the work of Heiberg and Martensen and to the version of Hegelianism that they brought to Denmark?

It is clear that Heiberg had a big and, in part, positive impact on him. When one of his own early works, an anonymously published newspaper article, was thought by some to be by Heiberg, Kierkegaard took this as an extreme compliment. He sought to get his own first book published in Heiberg's journal *Perseus: A Journal for the Speculative Idea*, and he himself seems to have used Heiberg's taxonomy of aesthetic form and especially Heiberg's critical requirement of the correspondence of idea and form in his own purely aesthetic writings.¹⁶ However, interestingly, Kierkegaard's most extensive notes on Hegel's own work relate precisely to the *Lectures on Aesthetics* and especially to passages about Antigone and about problems of tragedy and modernity that are substantially reflected in Kierkegaard's own attempt to create a 'modern Antigone' in the essay, 'The reflection of Ancient Tragedy in the Modern' in *Either/Or* 1. Here, Kierkegaard shows himself much closer to Hegel than he is to Heiberg with regard to issues around the limits of artistic representation and the specific challenges of modernity.¹⁷

However, it is no less clear from a sketch for a satirical play, *The Battle between the Old and new Soap Cellars*, that he probably wrote in 1838, the year of the high point of speculative thinking amongst his contemporaries, that Kierkegaard early on had an eye for the faddishness and thoughtlessness of a certain modish 'Hegelianism'.¹⁸ In fact (and for reasons we see shortly), it is unlikely that he was ever entirely seduced by this vogue. Although popular histories of ideas often portray him as standing alone against the dominant Hegelianism of the time, academic philosophy in Denmark had, for the most part, held itself in reserve vis-à-vis this new movement and, at the time, neither Heiberg nor Martensen held full-time tenured positions in the University. Poul Martin Møller (1794–1838), the philosophy professor with whom Kierkegaard seems to have had the most intimate relations (and who himself died in 1838), had been amongst the first to publish work critical of Hegelianism, in an essay 'On the Possibility of Proofs for Human Immortality'.¹⁹ Heiberg, presumably having seen in him a potential ally, referred to him as a 'deserter', but, in fact, Møller's position seems all along to have been (a) more empirically oriented than the typical Hegelian and (b) more orthodoxly Christian. Other Danish philosophers, such as F. C. Sibbern (1785–1872), were also critical of Hegel. In fact, the 1830s had seen an extensive debate on the new logic

that even drew in Bishop Mynster (1775–1854), who would later feature in Kierkegaard's polemical attack on the Church as the epitome of an ecclesiastical 'establishment man' but who was widely regarded as what we would call a leading public intellectual of the time (needless to say, Mynster argued for the soundness of Aristotelian as against Hegelian logic).²⁰ Kierkegaard therefore knew he had plenty of support in taking the field against the Hegelians, even if he was also going against the trend adopted by many of his own peers.

We have already seen enough to know that, in a sense, his response to Hegelianism was very much that of an insider to the Danish debate. We have already noted that in 1834 he had been tutored by Martensen on Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*; in 1837, he attended Martensen's 'Lectures on the Introduction to Speculative Dogmatics'; and in 1838, he copied out an amanuensis' notes on the lectures on 'Speculative Dogmatics' himself. In the Lecture Notes for 17 December 1837, he notes in passing that on the subject of Kant's doctrine of categories Martensen delivered 'an Ode [...] one of the worst he has delivered so far, a forced cleverness'.²¹ However, the notes themselves suggest he is not just sitting in the back row being irritated by Martensen's pretentiousness, but is also effectively summarizing the main points of the argument. Nor is he simply getting his Hegelianism from Martensen. In fact, his notes from this period show an extensive reading of a number of German Right Hegelians and other speculative theologians, including works dealing with the impact of the Left Hegelian perspective of David Friedrich Strauss, whose *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* had been published in 1835.²² The fullest of these notes deal with J. G. Erdmann's (1805–1892) work *Faith and Knowledge*. *Faith and Knowledge* offers a vigorous presentation of the speculative reading of the history of Western religious thought (which it also implicitly regards as the culminating point of human religious thought as such). Kierkegaard's notes are mostly just that, but at the end he makes a number of comments. These cover many of the points that will later reappear in his published criticisms of Hegelianism.

Thus, he criticizes Erdmann's replacing of the person (the 'I') with a subject-object conceived in terms of reason and thought, suggesting that 'reason' (it seems, implicitly, divine reason) 'lies beyond human beings'. The individual cannot immediately be identified with the universal. Erdmann's argument therefore involves a 'subreption', i.e., an illegitimate transfer of goods. An exhaustive analysis of human self-consciousness cannot yield an exhaustive account of reason (or, at the very least, that we cannot presuppose that it will do so). This, of course,

is to lay the axe at the very root of Erdmann's whole argument, because it is precisely such an internal analysis of self-consciousness that is to demonstrate the necessity of faith as knowledge of the union of divine and human.²³

Similarly, Kierkegaard goes on, Erdmann neglects Christianity's historical aspect. In a very difficult paragraph, he seems to argue that the appeal to experience may have been true in paganism, but in Christianity experience is subordinated to tradition in such a way that doctrine is already a distillation and transmission of what is essential. Christian faith, the argument seems to be saying, presupposes both experience and a certain interpretation of experience: it does not seek it.

Kierkegaard then moves to the relationship between the deduction of a standpoint and the historical demonstration of that standpoint. 'At several points', he says, the historical aspect of Erdmann's argument 'seems to me to be a caricature'. It is 'an ordering of life's accidental concretion that is as good as it can be but not of the Idea's necessary incarnation'. He also speaks of 'the yawning abyss between abstract deduction and historical actuality' – the necessity of thought does not explain the historical actuality, i.e., *why* God became man.²⁴

Turning to the concept of experience, Kierkegaard agrees that there is some merit in replacing a purely passive view of experience, experience as what happens to me, with the idea of experimentation, i.e., making experiences happen. But, he says, it is dangerous to apply this to Christianity. Even if I can subject every other supposed fact to my aprioristic hypotheses, can I do so to Christianity? Erdmann first develops a general position and then applies it to Christianity – but is this legitimate? Where reason asks: does this experience confirm the universal, exceptionless laws of reason? Christian faith asks: does this confirm the faith we have received from the tradition?

Kierkegaard then turns to Erdmann's discussion of supernaturalism. He accepts that Kant's ban on theoretical knowledge of the thing-in-itself means that the thing-in-itself is closed off to human consciousness, but, Kierkegaard seems to imply, this does not limit post-Kantian supernaturalism to simple agnosticism, because properly understood supernaturalism speaks of 'a total transformation of consciousness'. With regard to faith there begins 'a development absolutely from scratch', it is not a mere non-knowing but a new consciousness that is not circumscribed by the limits of consciousness in general as known apart from faith.²⁵ He also notes the tension between the ethical interest of the individual, totally committed to acting in the world, and 'delay' of ethical action required for theoretical reflection.

Kierkegaard does not directly draw out the full implications of all this himself at this point. However, these questions and comments anticipate points he will later make in, e.g., *Philosophical fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and I think it not unfair to understand these notes in the mirror of that later text. Here, as there, Kierkegaard's fundamental claims seem to be 1) that Christian faith is not exhaustively subject to the scrutiny of reason, not least because it involves a 'new consciousness', a total transformation of the human mind; 2) that the claims of faith are only assessable in the light of subjective interests; 3) that speculation presupposes what is to be proved, namely the dialectical interdependence of idea and manifestation; 4) and its account of the historical manifestation of religion is in fact a caricature serving the a priori interests of the speculative thinker; 5) but even on its own terms, speculation fails because its acceptance of the subjectivity of practical reason and will undermine any basis on which it could develop ontologically-endowed theoretical objects; 6) and, given the ethical interest of practical reason, concern with such theoretical objects would, in any case, prove ethically ruinous. Kierkegaard also seems to hint at the pivotal role of historically concrete testimony to the object of faith so that 7) insofar as the individual does bring an a priori to his own experiences it is not reason but the concrete content of tradition.

A further argument that resurfaces in the *Postscript* is also anticipated in the note on Erdmann's second lecture: 'Philosophy itself begins with a postulate, i.e., with a voluntary and mental act of postulating its subject-matter. This gives it a certain likeness to mathematics, but it also necessarily involves the will'.²⁶ That the abstraction from all experience required by the founding of philosophy in what is purely immediate will be said by Kierkegaard to be precisely a reason why, having made such an act of voluntary abstraction, idealist philosophy is unable to make a genuine return to reality (as we have seen).

These notes are important because they show clearly that Kierkegaard's mature position vis-à-vis Hegelianism is a development of a set of critical responses to speculative theology that are themselves properly theological and not simple expressions of personal animosity. Of course, part of the context is the sudden surge in interest in Hegelian theology occasioned by Martensen's lectures, but Kierkegaard's response is not simply that of an ironist bemused by the faddishness of scholarly life and irritated at one whom he might well have experienced as a possible intellectual rival. On the contrary, Kierkegaard shows himself to be at several points appreciative of Erdmann and it is clear that these notes represent an attempt at a serious intellectual engagement and cannot

be explained away on personal grounds. If not Hegel, the target is Hegelianism and, specifically, Hegelianism in some of its then best-known representatives.

Conclusion

After *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, the question of Hegelianism fades from Kierkegaard's published works. However, it did also produce a curious and rather large footnote. In June 1843, Kierkegaard had a visit from a young priest, Adolph Peter Adler (1812–1869). Adler was one year older than Kierkegaard and had been rather swept along by the Hegelian fever of the late 1830s. His own thesis, defended in 1840, had been on *The Most Important Forms of Isolated Subjectivity* and was written in the Hegelian mould. However, in December of 1842, Adler experienced a vision of Jesus, who appeared to him, telling him to burn his Hegelian books and also dictating some new words of revelation. Adler hoped that Kierkegaard would help him propagate this new teaching. Kierkegaard did indeed dedicate a book to Adler, showing how the latter's new position was internally inconsistent and indicated just how completely he lacked all sense for what was genuinely religious. However, although effectively completing this work in 1846, he withheld it from publication, probably because of its personal nature, and not wishing to add to Adler's woes, whose revelations led to his dismissal from Church office.²⁷ If this is a curious tragic-comic conclusion to the story of theological Hegelianism in Denmark, it is perhaps one Kierkegaard might have anticipated, demonstrating as it did the power of this new philosophy to sweep the unwary off their feet.

Notes

1. Kierkegaard (1992).
2. On the question of the 'beginning' in Hegel see also Inwood (this volume), who discusses Heidegger's take on it.
3. Kierkegaard relies fairly heavily at some points on Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen*. See Trendelenburg (1840), e.g. 23ff., 56ff, for the source of some of Kierkegaard's critical points.
4. For a fuller discussion of these points see my *The Philosophy of Kierkegaard* (Pattison 2005a, 13–14).
5. Kierkegaard (1992), 121.
6. See Steward (2003).
7. For a discussion of this study, see my *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century* (Pattison 2013, ch. 1).
8. Kierkegaard (1992), 184.

9. On Heiberg in general see Stewart (2007, 2008).
10. For example, Theodor Hæcker's German translation: Kierkegaard (1914), or Alexander Dru's translation: Kierkegaard (1940).
11. Translated by J. Stewart in Heiberg (2006).
12. Translated by J. Stewart in Heiberg (2005).
13. For Kierkegaard's view on this see Chapter 5, 'Food for Thought' in my *Kierkegaard, Religion and the Nineteenth Century Crisis of Culture* (Pattison 2005b).
14. See J. Stewart (2009).
15. For a full discussion of Martensen, see Stewart (2007), vol. II.
16. For a full discussion of this see my *Kierkegaard: The Aesthetic and the Religious* (Pattison 1999) and also Pattison (2007).
17. For a full discussion of this, see my *Kierkegaard and the Quest for Unambiguous Life* (Pattison 2012), Chapter 6 'Antigone and the End of Art'.
18. See Kierkegaard (2007), 273–289. For discussion see Pattison (2008).
19. Møller (1856), 38–140.
20. The relevant articles from both sides are now available in English in Stewart (2009).
21. Kierkegaard (2007), vol. 3, 135.
22. For discussion see Pattison (2013), ch. 3.
23. See Kierkegaard (2010), 160. For discussion see Pattison (2013), ch. 2.
24. Kierkegaard (2010), 161.
25. Kierkegaard (2010), 164.
26. Kierkegaard (2010), 143.
27. See Kierkegaard (2009).

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6

Hegel, Cassirer and Heidegger

Michael Inwood

Introduction

Writing around the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, Hegel could, more or less, assimilate the natural and social sciences of his day and accommodate them in a system. This provided philosophy with a flattering role: it could unify and systematize all the knowledge available to human beings. But soon after Hegel's time, the expansion of the sciences and their growing prestige made this impossible. What were philosophers to do?

This chapter explores some of the options that German philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth, writing in the aftermath of Hegel's philosophical system, saw as viable for the future role of philosophy. After sketching the reasons for the rise of neo-Kantianism in the second half of the nineteenth century, it focuses on two thinkers who each were influenced by both neo-Kantian and Hegelian thought, but took them up in such different ways that they ended up in opposition to one another: Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Cassirer's philosophy of culture is strikingly similar in structure to Hegel's account of the different forms of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Heidegger also engaged with the *Phenomenology*, and wrote an extensive commentary on its Introduction. An analysis of this text shows, however, that Heidegger's reading of Hegel depends on some controversial assumptions, and it illustrates the ways in which Heidegger's basic philosophical questions differ from those raised by Hegel in the Introduction.

Cassirer's and Heidegger's conflicting views of what philosophy should be about culminated in a remarkable public debate that took place in Davos in 1929. It can be understood as an encounter between

a philosophy of culture that by and large remains within the orbit of Hegelian thought (Cassirer) and a philosophy of 'Dasein' that starts from the existential conditions of human life. Cassirer's own analysis of Heidegger's way of doing philosophy, however, suggests that there are alternatives to the latter's individualistic approach that saves a form of Hegelian idealism into the twentieth century. But whether or not this is a reading of Heidegger's philosophy that Heidegger himself would accept is, again, open to debate.

'Back to Kant!': the rise of neo-Kantianism

One alternative for philosophers in the nineteenth century was to become the handmaiden of the sciences and to adopt the mechanistic materialism that science seemed to recommend. But some philosophers declined this humble role with the cry 'Back to Kant!' – a slogan coined in 1865 by Otto Liebmann (1840–1912)¹. Philosophers were to continue Kant's (1724–1804) project of transcendental idealism, resisting both materialism and Hegelian metaphysics.² In the view of these philosophers, Kant pursued epistemology, not ontology, our knowledge of things, not the things of which we have knowledge, and in this they followed Kant. Like Kant, they also equated knowledge with the mathematical and natural sciences. They explored the foundations, and presuppositions, of the sciences. But they had some differences with Kant. Kant believed that behind things as we know them, there are things-in-themselves that we cannot know. On the one side there is us, with our inbuilt presuppositions – space and time, and categories such as substance and causality. On the other side are things-in-themselves.³ Things-in-themselves are not, or cannot be known to be, in space and time, nor subject to causality. But things-in-themselves transmit to us sensations and on these we impose the forms of spatiality and temporality, and the categories of substance, causality, and so on. In this way we produce the appearances or phenomena we do know – in contrast to the noumena, the things-in-themselves, that we cannot know. Kant erects a 'Keep Out' notice before things-in-themselves: 'Do not ask questions beyond this point'. However, Kant retained unknowable things-in-themselves, for he clung to certain ethical and religious beliefs. Men are free and immortal, and there is a God who underwrites these gifts. The deterministic world of phenomena leaves no room for God, freedom and immortality. But Kant locates them in the realm of things-in-themselves. This is faith, not knowledge. 'I had to deny knowledge', Kant said, 'in order to make room for faith'.⁴

Most neo-Kantians saw no need to make room for faith in Kant's sense.⁵ They happily dispensed with things-in-themselves, for this and other reasons. It is, for example, hard to see how things-in-themselves can provide sensations, if categories, like causality, do not apply to them. Neo-Kantians also rejected Kant's view that concepts and intuitions, thoughts and sensations, are coordinate and independent of each other. Any sensations of which we are aware already involve thought and interpretation. So neo-Kantians downgrade sensations and stress the role of concepts in our experience. We produce science with little, if any, external input. If science is true, this is not because it reflects or corresponds to a realm outside science, but because of its internal coherence and orderliness. *We* produce science. But who are 'we'? It is not we as concrete empirical individuals who produce science and the world science describes. If that were so, neo-Kantian idealism would be subjective idealism, or what Kant calls 'empirical idealism', according to which the objects we encounter are products of our own minds. But that is not so. The objects encountered by an individual are *empirically* real, for the individual. Science is produced not by empirical subjects, but by the 'subject in general' or 'consciousness in general', the reason that all humans share. In relation to this subject, the objects of science are ideal, whereas in relation to the empirical subject they are real. Neo-Kantian idealism is transcendental idealism; it accommodates empirical realism.

Ernst Cassirer was a pupil of Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), who established the conception of Kant prevalent among neo-Kantians.⁶ Cassirer began as a member of the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism, whose leading members were Cohen and Paul Natorp (1854–1924). He was, among other things, a notable Kant-scholar, who interpreted Kant in the dominant neo-Kantian manner. Martin Heidegger was also supervised by a neo-Kantian, Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936), a member of the 'Southwest' or 'Baden School'. Heidegger later fell under the influence of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the founder of 'phenomenology', systematic reflection on consciousness and its objects. Both Husserl and Heidegger owed much to Natorp, though neither regarded themselves as neo-Kantians. In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger engaged in phenomenology, but, as we see, his version of phenomenology differed greatly from Husserl's. Heidegger did see himself as a Kantian of sorts, but his Kant was not the Kant of the neo-Kantians: Heidegger's Kant was not an epistemologist, focusing on scientific knowledge, but an ontologist and metaphysician, emphasizing the finitude of man and his dependence on sensory input from other entities, in contrast to Hegel and Cassirer, who are more ready to regard *mankind* as infinite.

Forward to Hegel: Cassirer's turn to a Hegelian philosophy of culture

In his early works, Cassirer too focused on the sciences, especially physics. In *Substance and Function* (1910) he argued that physics has progressed from a naïve realism that pictures the world to an abstract symbolic system that orders the world but does not picture it. Science no longer represents a world of picturable substances. It applies 'functions' that symbolize the world. This view fitted well with the transformation of atoms from solid little lumps into things that can hardly be described in literal language.

So far Cassirer is a loyal neo-Kantian. But later he realized that science is not the only way of making sense of things. We symbolize in other ways too – through language, mythology, religion, and art. In the 1920s, he wrote *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, in 3 vols.: *Language, Mythical Thinking*, and *The Phenomenology of Knowledge*. Kant neglected language. He was criticized for this by some of his contemporaries, especially Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788). It may be surprising that Cassirer treats language as one symbolic form among others. Myth-makers use language, so do scientists. But Cassirer regards language as rather primitive, with roots in mythology, and gradually discarded as scientific knowledge advances. Mythology, and religion, differ from science. They give mythical accounts of space, time, and number, that physics ignores. But myth is essential for the development of language. 'Knowledge' in the third volume amounts to 'science' – mainly mathematics and natural science, though later Cassirer considered also the social or cultural sciences. He explains that when using the term 'Phenomenology', it is meant in Hegel's sense, not Husserl's. His enterprise is thus Hegelian:

philosophical knowledge must encompass the totality of cultural forms and [...] this totality can be made visible only in the transitions from one form to another. The truth is the whole – yet this whole cannot be presented all at once but must be unfolded progressively by thought in its own autonomous movement and rhythm. [...] The end, the telos, of the human spirit, cannot be apprehended and expressed if it is taken as something existing in itself, as something detached and separate from its beginning and middle. Philosophical reflection does not set the end against the middle and the beginning but takes all three as integral factors in a unitary total movement. In this fundamental principle the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms agrees

with Hegel's formulation, however much it must differ in both its foundations and development. It too aspires to provide the individual with a ladder which will lead him from the primary configurations found in the world of the immediate consciousness to the world of pure knowledge. From the standpoint of philosophical inquiry every single rung of the ladder is indispensable; every single one must be considered, appreciated – in short 'known' – if we wish to understand knowledge not so much in its result, in its mere product, as in its character of a process, in the mode and form of its procedure itself.⁷

Cassirer is Hegelian. There certainly are differences. But the similarities are more striking:

Hegel introduces the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by asking 'What is the absolute?', that is: What are things-in-themselves? Hegel does not answer this question directly. He approaches it by considering our different ways of viewing the world, different forms or 'shapes' of consciousness. He begins with the simplest form of consciousness, finds it internally incoherent, and moves on to another form of consciousness that repairs the inadequacies of the first. But that form in turn proves to be incoherent and is followed by another form. And so it goes on until we finally reach 'absolute knowledge'. Absolute knowledge, we might expect, will be knowledge of the absolute and will answer our original question. But it does not. What we get under this heading is an overall account of the forms of consciousness we have passed through and the logical relations between them. The *Phenomenology* was intended as an introduction to Hegel's logic and, if he gives any answer to the question 'What is the absolute?', it is that the absolute is the logical structure of the world.

Cassirer's approach is similar. Each symbolic form passes into the next, and each stage in a symbolic form passes into the next, by what Cassirer calls 'dialectic'.⁸ Science is more adequate than mythology, but it is not that science is true and mythology false. Science does not represent or correspond to the way the world really is, not because science is still incomplete, but because there is no world accessible to us apart from symbolic forms, and no world at all apart from the world or worlds we create with symbolic forms.⁹ Science is superior to mythology because it gives a more coherent and orderly picture. But the picture is not a picture of anything outside the picture. Nor are we urged to abandon mythology altogether, and still less language. Every symbolic form presents an essential aspect of the world.

Kant had believed that concepts and intuitions or sensations are coordinate and distinct. Concepts, and the forms of space and time, come

from us. Intuitions are 'the given' and to them we apply concepts. Hegel had questioned this dualism. The nearest approach to given intuitions in the *Phenomenology* occurs in the first form of consciousness, sensory certainty. But consciousness's attempt to pick them out, without conceptualizing them, fails. It fails in Cassirer too. We have no access to intuitions or sensations except through symbolic forms. We interpret things all the way down and never reach a raw unconceptualized substratum. Even the conceptualized sense experience we do have is discarded as we move from lower symbolic forms to higher ones. As previously quoted, Cassirer provides a ladder leading from the 'primary configurations found in the world of the immediate consciousness to the world of pure knowledge'. But it is not clear what these primary configurations are or whether there is any 'immediate consciousness'. Cassirer gives no clear answer to the question: 'What do we apply the symbolic forms to? What are we trying to order, to make sense of?' Sometimes he draws a contrast between life (*Leben*) and spirit (*Geist*), but usually in order to criticize philosophers – Henri Bergson (1859–1941), Georg Simmel (1858–1918) and Max Scheler (1874–1928) – who championed life against spirit. No clear view emerges of what life is, only the views of other philosophers about what life is.

In some places, Cassirer discusses animal life. An animal lives in a closed environment (*Umwelt*), to which it is perfectly adapted. It has no stable entities, only inarticulated 'complex qualities'. It perceives only things that serve its needs. A lizard hears a rustle in the grass, but not a nearby gun shot. A kingfisher sees insects only when they are moving. A spider detects a fly in its web only if it wriggles. Animals are aware only of what is actual, not of what is possible.¹⁰ Human beings are not like that. We are aware of possibilities. We notice things that do not serve our needs and purposes. We form a conception of the whole world, not only our surroundings. But for that we need language, symbolic forms, and how we get them is a mystery.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel gives an introduction to 'science', to the systematic philosophical consideration of the world. Science also considers things that are not science, such as art and religion and history. But what interests Hegel are human cultural products, the world of spirit, *Geist*, not the world of 'life'. Rational adults have an objective, rational view of the world, and are not just absorbed in their immediate surroundings and concerns. Hegel does mention one's 'individual world', the world seen from one's own viewpoint and centred on one's immediate surroundings. But attachment to this world, he says, is pathological and should be replaced by an objective, scientific conception of

the world.¹¹ In this vein, Hegel insists that proper knowledge is expressed in language. How, we wonder, did Hegel find his way home or recognize his wife when he met her in the street? But Cassirer sides with Hegel. He too is interested in large impersonal systems, not with what Heidegger called 'average everydayness', the births, lives, and deaths of the individuals who ultimately form these large impersonal systems.¹² Hegel and Cassirer focus on *Geist* rather than what Heidegger calls *Dasein*, which is shortly be discussed.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel distinguishes between, on the one hand, 'we' or 'us', that is, Hegel and his audience, and, on the other hand, the form of consciousness we are considering. Hegel and his readers know things about a form of consciousness that this form of consciousness cannot know, rather as we know things about dogs that dogs cannot know, for example, that they are vertebrates. Each form of consciousness involves a particular type of self, and each form of consciousness has a particular conception of itself. An earlier and more limited form of consciousness cannot survey the whole range of forms of consciousness; it could not write the *Phenomenology*. Cassirer's symbolic forms follow a similar logic. The answer to the question 'What is a human being?' varies with the symbolic form. It also varies according to whether the question is answered by an adherent of the symbolic form itself or by Cassirer. A mythologizer gives a different answer than a scientist, presenting a mythological conception of a human being. And Cassirer gives a different account of the mythologizing self than the mythologizer does, because Cassirer knows things about the mythologizer that the mythologizer does not know. But Cassirer's answer reflects and respects the answer given by the mythologizer. He does not say that the mythologizer is just the same sort of human being as a scientist is, except that he is unaware of this. For Cassirer has no view about what a human being is, independently of the symbolic form under consideration. He cannot insist that humans are all as science views them any more than he can say that science is true and mythology false. Could a mythologizer produce, or even understand, Cassirer's theory of symbolic forms? A mythologizer might have some hazy conception of alternatives to their own symbolic form. The Azande no doubt gave some account of Evans-Prichard, just as he gave an account of them. But mythologizers who have met Evans-Prichard are not pure mythologizers. A pure mythologizer could hardly have any conception of science, nor of any alternative to mythology. So Cassirer, like Hegel, needs to have reached the end of the series of forms he surveys before he can survey them. Cassirer has to be a scientific human, though with a sympathetic insight into non-scientific humans.

Cassirer is, however, a philosopher, and philosophy is not a symbolic form. It is just a way of describing symbolic forms. Hegel's *Phenomenology* was intended as a ladder leading to absolute knowledge. 'Absolute knowledge' is Hegel himself, Hegel's own philosophy. Cassirer too says that he will provide a ladder leading to the 'pure knowledge'. But pure knowledge is not Cassirer himself. It is not philosophy, but science – Cassirer draws a sharper distinction between science and philosophy than Hegel does. Cassirer's philosophical enterprise is therefore not motivated within the symbolic forms he describes. His system is not self-enclosed, or, as Hegel might say 'infinite', in the way that Hegel's is meant to be. Moreover, Cassirer disapproves of Hegel's logic. He cannot say, like Hegel, that the absolute is the logical structure of the world.¹³ Cassirer reserves judgement on the absolute. So Cassirer had his differences with Hegel. But the differences are not sufficient to strip him of his status as a Hegelian. It was as a Hegelian that he entered the lists against Heidegger.

Martin Heidegger: the turn to 'Dasein'

Heidegger, like Cassirer, had much in common with Hegel. He was, for one thing, a holistic thinker, who could agree with Hegel and Cassirer that the truth is the whole. Again, he, like Hegel, though unlike Kant and Cassirer, explored and exploited the full resources of the German language, past as well as present. His philosophical journey, like that of Hegel, was ultimately motivated by religion.¹⁴ When, in his great work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger speaks of *Dasein* and its self-interpretations, it is easy to be reminded of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) and its successive forms, and to think that Hegel, like Heidegger, is in quest of the Being of beings.¹⁵

But the differences are as important as the similarities. While Hegel (and Cassirer) are primarily interested in 'spirit', in the cultural products and the objective, impersonal structures that liberate us from the hazards of everyday life, Heidegger starts from the bottom, from the 'average everydayness' of *Dasein*, its possibilities and its choices. Hegel's hero is a statesman, an artist or a philosopher; Heidegger's hero is a village cobbler. Hegel is less concerned with the individual than with mankind, and this enables him to regard man, with some plausibility, as 'infinite'; Heidegger is concerned with Tom, Dick and Harry and is thus impressed with our finitude. Nevertheless, Heidegger regarded Hegel as a great adversary and often writes as if he felt Hegel looking over his shoulder, fastidiously avoiding Hegelian terms, such as *Bewusstsein* and

Geist, or else using others, such as *Welt*, 'world', *Dasein*, or *Geschichte*, 'history', in significantly unhegelian senses. He engaged in skirmishes with Hegel throughout his career. One of the most interesting is his detailed commentary on Hegel's Introduction to the *Phenomenology*.¹⁶ It presents a strikingly novel account of Hegel's Introduction and of the *Phenomenology* as a whole. As will become clear, however, it depends on several contestable interpretations of what Hegel said, some of which I attempt to expose and explain.

Heidegger's reading of Hegel's introduction

Hegel begins the Introduction with a problem raised by the philosophy of his time: Our cognitive equipment is like an instrument that we apply to reality, to the absolute, or like a medium through which we see it. But an instrument may alter what we apply it to and a medium may distort our vision. So how can we gain reliable knowledge of the absolute? It is in response to this problem that Hegel proposes to consider the various forms of consciousness, as has already been described. These forms of consciousness form a logical sequence. Each one assesses itself and finds its conception of its object defective. Out of the rubble of its object a new object emerges and hence a new form of consciousness that repairs the defects of the old, but which finds a new defect in itself that gives rise to a further form of consciousness, and so on, until we reach 'absolute knowledge' or 'science' – Hegel's own philosophy. Each form of consciousness criticizes itself, is sceptical about itself. Hegel and his readers do not intervene. They simply watch the dialectic that each form of consciousness undergoes within itself. The work thus initiates us into Hegel's philosophy – it guides our way from 'natural consciousness' to 'science'.

Heidegger views the *Phenomenology* as follows. It is not concerned with epistemology, but with ontology. It is the last gasp of the age-old metaphysics in which God is the ultimate ground of things. Hegel's view of philosophy is the same as Aristotle's. It does not ask 'How can we know what there is?'. It asks 'What is there?' and more importantly 'What is it for something to be?' Like Aristotle, Hegel believes that the supreme being is God and is thus engaged in 'onto-theology'. But Hegel's view of Being owes as much to Descartes as to Aristotle. What truly is for Hegel is spirit, spirit rooted in human self-consciousness. This is the new land on which Descartes first set foot, but which only Hegel fully explored. For Hegel Descartes's main failing was this: Descartes's 'absolute foundation' of knowledge was the thinking ego. But the ego

is not the absolute. The absolute is God. So in Descartes the epistemological order and the ontological order do not coincide. Hegel wants them to coincide, Heidegger says. This is also why Hegel complains that his unnamed opponents assume that the absolute is separate from our cognition. Therefore, Hegel brings the absolute and the ego together. God becomes present as absolute subjectivity.

According to Heidegger, however, God or the absolute does not emerge only at the end of the *Phenomenology*. It is present from the start and plays an essential part in the development of the forms of consciousness. For Hegel, Heidegger says, cognition is the light of truth shone on us by the absolute. Consciousness, he continues, involves a dynamic interplay between two elements, a fairly inert natural consciousness and a more alert real consciousness. Natural consciousness focuses on objects or beings, while real consciousness focuses on Being or what it is for something to be an object, objecthood. Natural consciousness has a tendency to settle down in its knowledge of a given range of objects or beings, while real consciousness unsettles it by appealing to Being. These two aspects of consciousness engage in a dialogue, and that is dialectic. But the final goal of the process, the absolute and the absolute knowledge represented by Hegel himself, terminates their dialogue and draws consciousness towards itself, drives consciousness on to its true existence. Hegel himself sees ahead to the goal of the process and intervenes in the dispute between natural and real consciousness to ensure that they advance towards their goal. Hegel's mention of scepticism refers to his vision of the goal, because the word 'scepticism' comes from a Greek word for 'seeing', *skepsis*. Consciousness, Heidegger says, is sceptical about beings because of its *skepsis*, its insight, into Being. What matters is not so much to get consciousness to have the right objects, as to get it away from beings and objects and on to the consideration of Being, to combat its sluggish tendency to settle down into a system of belief by encouraging its explorative, innovative, questioning tendency.

In Heidegger's eyes, the role of the absolute and of Hegel's vision of it in the advance of consciousness implies that Hegel's account of the successive forms of consciousness is not just an introduction to science. It is itself a part of science, since absolute knowledge, science itself, is implicit in it from the very beginning. The *Phenomenology* cannot therefore introduce its alert readers to science; they need to know science already in order to understand what is going on in the book. As Heidegger puts it, the *Phenomenology* is not a travelogue recording consciousness's journey from naiveté to science, nor is it a guide book

enabling its readers to find their way to science. It is science from the start, though not of course complete science.

Heidegger versus Hegel

In what follows, I analyse some essential points of disagreement between Heidegger and Hegel that come up in Heidegger's reading of Hegel's Introduction. They show that Heidegger's reading of Hegel is more Heideggerian than Hegelian: Heidegger reads more into Hegel's text than Hegel is committed to, partly because he attributes his own understanding of the role of language and of the nature of philosophy more broadly to Hegel.

1. Hegel says that his opponents presuppose that 'the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it, and yet is something real [*wahrhaft*]'¹⁷. Heidegger implies that Hegel's target here is Descartes's separation of his epistemic foundation, the *cogito*, from the absolute, God, and that Hegel is a *fully developed* Cartesian¹⁸. Hegel's target, however, is more likely to be Kant than Descartes, and his central complaint then is that the knowing subject has no access to the absolute, not that it is not identical with the absolute. Moreover, whereas Heidegger's comments suggest that whenever Hegel speaks of the absolute he brings into play his own ultimate view of it, Hegel is surely using this term in the sense in which his opponents use it. The following paragraphs imply that Hegel is here arguing *ad hominem*, rather than smuggling in his own metaphysical baggage.¹⁹
2. Hegel writes: 'if the Absolute is supposed merely to be brought nearer to us through this instrument, without anything in it being altered, like a bird caught by a lime-twigg, it would surely laugh our little ruse to scorn, if it were not with us [*bei uns*], in and for itself, all along, and of its own volition'.²⁰ This, Heidegger says, shows that Hegel believes that the absolute is with us from the start,²¹ which implies that the *Phenomenology* cannot be merely an 'introduction'. But another interpretation is preferable: Suppose cognition is an instrument, not the sort that alters its object, but like the sticky lime with which we catch birds. We couldn't catch the absolute that way unless it were already with us and, like a gullible bird, wanted to be with us. Hegel is not saying the absolute wills to be with us, except insofar as it is compared to a bird. He may believe that the absolute is with us, but he is not saying it here, only noting an incoherence in the view of cognition as

an instrument. Similarly, Hegel's following comments on cognition as a medium can most plausibly be understood as being *ad hominem*, showing the incoherence of the medium-view, without divulging his own substantial view.²²

3. Hegel speaks of 'science' (*Wissenschaft*) rather than 'philosophy'²³, Heidegger says, to mark his conquest of the land discovered by Descartes; philosophy considers beings as beings, while science in Hegel's sense rests more specifically on the self-certainty of the subject that unconditionally knows itself. However, Hegel probably means by 'science' what Heidegger says he does *not* mean: an ideal aspired to, but inadequately fulfilled by, the natural and mathematical sciences, an ideal marked by system and completeness as much as by certainty.²⁴ Hegel may well believe that all knowledge is self-knowledge – in a sense some way removed from what Descartes would mean by this – but he need not use 'science' to mark this doctrine. In any case, Hegel does not introduce his considered view of science here. 'Science' here simply means cognition of the absolute, in contrast to preliminary epistemological doubts and manoeuvres. A pattern is now emerging in Heidegger's interpretation: whenever Hegel uses a word, Heidegger takes him to mean by it what Hegel *ends up* meaning by it.
4. In D3/M75, Hegel says: 'the Absolute alone is true, or the truth alone is absolute'. He does not justify these claims, says Heidegger, because they are too deep and fundamental: the absolute alone is true because (owing to its link with words meaning 'absolve, acquit, withdraw') it withdraws from external objects and thus coincides with self-certainty.²⁵ But it is more likely that Hegel does not justify his claims because they seem obvious to him: if a statement is true it states what is really true, not what *appears* to be true. His target, here and elsewhere, is not Descartes but Kant's belief that our cognition is of appearances only. He may be unfair in implying that Kant had no sense or criterion for the truth of claims about phenomena. But his point is compatible with realism and does not entail the sort of idealism that Heidegger attributes to him.
5. Science tests its claims, Heidegger says, but it tests them in the presence of the absolute.²⁶ This theme, the presence of the absolute, pervades Heidegger's interpretation. Even if the *Phenomenology* is an introduction for beginners, Hegel must be some steps ahead of his readers. He knew a lot about his final destination, absolute knowledge – he had written about it before. But it does not follow that Hegel presupposes such knowledge on the part of his readers or of the consciousness

under examination. If he does not, then the *Phenomenology* may be a travelogue or a guidebook, describing, or guiding, consciousness's journey from naiveté to science.

But, says Heidegger, the *Phenomenology* is not a travelogue or a guidebook. Hegel's 'exposition' (*Darstellung*) of 'appearing' knowledge does not start from natural consciousness and end with science; it is science from the start. This contradicts Hegel's statement that:

Now, because it has only appearing knowledge for its object [*Weil nun diese Darstellung nur das erscheinende Wissen zum Gegenstande hat*], this exposition seems not to be Science, free and self-moving in its own peculiar shape; yet from this standpoint it can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge...²⁷

If we take 'only' (*nur*) with 'appearing knowledge', it seems as if there is some other, real knowledge behind or beyond appearing knowledge which the *Phenomenology* attempts to reach, and that the exposition is not proper science because it exhibits only appearing knowledge. So Heidegger relocates 'only' to qualify 'exposition' (*Darstellung*), and makes Hegel mean: 'This is only the exposition of appearing knowledge, etc'. Then appearing knowledge may be real knowledge, so we can say that the exposition is science because it presents real knowledge (even if, as 'only' implies, it is not science 'in all respects') and that natural consciousness cannot be identified with appearing knowledge, that is, real knowledge, either by us or by itself. So the *Phenomenology* cannot be a travelogue or guidebook.²⁸ On Heidegger's account, Hegel must regard real knowledge as identical with appearing knowledge, since Hegel is a Cartesian for whom 'appearing' and 'appearance' mark the luminous certainty of knowledge. In fact, Hegel is not a Cartesian: he does not use 'appear' and 'appearance' in Descartes's sense.

Three questions about Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology* should be distinguished: 1) Is the appearing knowledge that the *Phenomenology* presents unscientific knowledge with which we might identify the natural consciousness? 2) Could the natural consciousness identify itself with appearing knowledge and arrive at science by reading the *Phenomenology*? 3) Is Hegel's exposition science? That these are distinct questions is suggested by an analogy. A psychologist such as Piaget records the stages by which a child acquires, say, the adult conception of space. At the early stages the child has only appearing knowledge, not

real knowledge. However, Piaget has real knowledge all along: he knows the concept of space at the terminus of the process. The fact that he is presenting only appearing knowledge does not entail that his exposition is not real knowledge or science. His readers, however, fall between Piaget and the child. They do not know as much as Piaget does. But to follow the exposition they must know more than the child does. A child could not acquire the concept of space by reading Piaget's exposition. You need to be some way beyond the early stages before you can understand the exposition of them.

This expresses the traditional account of the *Phenomenology* that Heidegger is attacking. The exposition of appearing consciousness is virtually science, though not complete science. The appearing knowledge exhibited is not real knowledge, though it improves as we proceed. Hegel's readers do not need to know as much as Hegel: some form of appearing knowledge or natural consciousness is enough for them to understand the *Phenomenology*, though it probably needs to be some way beyond the opening stages.

Heidegger might question the analogy. People had a reasonable conception of space before anyone gave an account of their acquisition of it. But no one had Hegel's science before Hegel gave an account of its acquisition: the exposition of appearing knowledge is essential to the absolute knowledge that emerges from it. By contrast, children acquire the concept of space by certain stages independently of any exposition of this process. But, Heidegger says, consciousness does not develop in the way the *Phenomenology* describes independently of the exposition of it; the exposition is essential to the 'experience' that consciousness undertakes. This is controversial: Hegel says that consciousness develops without any help from 'us'. We just watch, seeing things that consciousness does not, but not helping it on its way.²⁹ Heidegger interprets him otherwise. Consciousness, he says, is not intrinsically inert. If it were, nothing could get it moving. It involves a dynamic interaction between two elements – the fairly inert natural consciousness and the more alert real consciousness. But the 'exposition' must intervene in their inherent restlessness if any advance is to occur. The terminus of the *Phenomenology*, absolute knowledge, plays a crucial part: it draws consciousness towards itself. The *Darstellung* involves seeing ahead to the terminus. It brings this vision with it in its intervention in the current phase of consciousness. Heidegger links this with Hegel's claim that the *Phenomenology* involves scepticism.³⁰ The root from which 'scepticism' derives, '*skepsis*, seeing', is close to the surface here – again, Heidegger sees more in the words than Hegel intended.³¹

7. In Heidegger's view, consciousness in the form of *Darstellung* sees ahead to the goal and thereby foresees all the stations on the way to it. This is what guarantees the completeness of the forms of consciousness traversed in the *Phenomenology*. If 'scepticism' refers primarily to seeing, what role does scepticism in its usual sense play? A subdued role, according to Heidegger, and not on the face of it the role Hegel assigns it. For Hegel, consciousness in one form sees defects in its object or range of objects, and out of the remnants of the old object there emerges a new object, such as things with properties. The new object is consciousness's knowledge (*Wissen*) of the old object.³² Heidegger acknowledges the presence in Hegel of the distinction between knowledge and its object, but for him a more important distinction is that between concrete terms, such as 'object', 'the apparent', 'the true', 'the real', and on the other hand, abstract terms like 'objecthood', 'appearance', 'truth', 'reality'. This is related to Heidegger's own distinction between beings and Being, a central tenet of his approach in *Being and Time*. Distinctions of this type are not at all apparent in Hegel's text, but Heidegger sees them everywhere. For example, when Hegel says that 'Science, just because it comes on the scene, is itself an appearance',³³ etc., Heidegger takes this to mean not just that science appears on the scene in the way that unscientific knowledge does, but in a quasi-Cartesian sense: that it is the *light of the absolute* which illumines a form of knowledge and reveals its limitations. The *Darstellung* is essential if knowledge is to appear in this way, that is, to appear in its appearance.³⁴

Why Heidegger misinterprets Hegel: two visions of philosophy

Here, some comments on Heidegger's own central categories are needed. Because appearance is, in Heidegger's view, the essential mode of Being of consciousness, the distinction between what appears and appearance is connected with other, parallel distinctions, especially that between beings and Being. One role they play is this: consciousness involves two elements, natural consciousness and real consciousness. Natural consciousness focuses on concrete entities – the true, beings, objects, etc. To do this it needs an implicit grasp of the Being of beings, etc., but it does not focus on it. Real consciousness, by contrast, focuses on Being, truth, objecthood, etc. For Heidegger, dialectic is primarily a dialogue between natural and real consciousness, for natural consciousness has a sufficient grasp of Being, etc., to engage in a dialogue and be unsettled

by it in its attachment to beings. But once it has been unsettled, it settles down in knowledge of a new range of beings. For Heidegger, natural consciousness is distinct from appearing knowledge and from philosophically untutored consciousness. It is consciousness's tendency to settle down into a 'form', *Gestalt*, in contrast to its innovative, questioning tendency. This occurs at every stage of the *Phenomenology*: even when one has reached absolute knowledge, one can settle down as natural consciousness. It amounts to what Heidegger earlier called *das Man*. The crucial thing for Heidegger is not to get consciousness to have the right objects, but to get it away from beings and objects to the consideration of Being, of objecthood, etc. It is sceptical about beings, he says, because of its *skepsis*, insight, into Being. What matters is to arouse consciousness from its dogmatic slumber, not to ensure that it has the right dogma. Since natural consciousness is the sluggish element in consciousness, the *Phenomenology* cannot be a means to, or account of, the education of natural consciousness. Natural consciousness is essentially ineducable. Hegel mentions *Verzweiflung*, despair.³⁵ But natural consciousness is too sluggish to despair as it is constantly dislodged from its current dogma. It is absolute cognition that despairs over natural consciousness. It despairs not of our ability to reach absolute knowledge, but over natural consciousness's tendency to settle down rather than keep on the move.³⁶

Most of this conflicts with what Hegel says, for example with Hegel's account of how the new object of consciousness replaces the old. The new object that always arises for consciousness, Heidegger says, is not something true and a being; it is the truth of the true, the beingness of beings, the appearance of the apparent, experience itself.³⁷ But in the sentence he refers to, Hegel says nothing of the sort: 'This new object contains the nothingness of the first, it is what experience has made of it'³⁸ – not, as Heidegger implies, experience in general, supposedly the Being of consciousness, but consciousness's specific experience with the old object.

It may be true that Hegel implicitly presupposes the absolute idealism that Heidegger attributes to him or that we need to read to the end of the *Phenomenology* to understand its beginning. But it is a different question whether these claims are supported by Hegel's Introduction. Heidegger tends to find his view of what Hegel is saying overall in Hegel's every word, especially the word 'absolute'. It is unsound to assume that whenever a word is used it has the meaning that the speaker eventually gives it. This would make *ad hominem* arguments impossible, and also introductions. An introductory talk entitled, say,

'What is the atom?' does not begin by using the word 'atom' in the sense eventually given it, or we could not understand the title before hearing the lecture. Perhaps philosophy is different. Hegel believes that philosophy moves in a circle and Heidegger stresses the hermeneutic circle. But they do not believe that the circle is a strict circle, whose beginning is exactly the same as the end. If it were, we would not need to read beyond their first sentence.

Hegel often uses words in older senses or at least calls older senses into play. Often, but not always: his contrast between '*Moralität*' and '*Sittlichkeit*' (roughly 'individual morality' and 'social morality') depends on stressing the descent of '*Sittlichkeit*' from '*Sitte*', 'custom', while disregarding the origin of '*Moralität*' in the Latin '*mos*', 'custom', and using '*Moralität*' in its current Kantian sense. Heidegger surpasses Hegel in this respect, insisting that 'dialectic' involves dialogue, that '*Skeptizismus*' harks back to vision, even when we can make good sense of what Hegel says if we take his words in their contemporary sense. Hegel does indeed distinguish his own 'scepticism' from Descartes's, but because it is more radically sceptical, not because it is a sort of vision.³⁹ Paradoxically, Heidegger's suppression of Hegel's scepticism helps Heidegger to make him look more Cartesian than he otherwise would be. For Hegel is arguably quite sceptical about consciousness as such, with an object confronting it, whatever that object might be. If Hegel was sceptical about consciousness as such, as well as exploring its structure and possible forms, then he was breaking out of what Heidegger sees as the Cartesian framework, using consciousness as a ladder to absolute knowledge, and not, as Heidegger interprets him, simply exploring the ontology of consciousness (and of self-consciousness and spirit) and thus already engaged in science more or less unqualified.

Heidegger has a more interventionist view of philosophy than Hegel does. He conceived of himself as a philosophical revolutionary, whereas Hegel presented himself as systematizing the accomplishments of his predecessors and the achievements of his post-revolutionary age. Heidegger's philosopher is more of a gadfly than an owl. He unsettles us from the complacency of our everyday beliefs whatever they may be. The philosopher, the thinker, is also an 'origin'. In Heidegger's view, such settled beliefs as we have stem in large part from the original activity of the philosopher. Hence Heidegger finds it hard to take Hegel's word for it that the philosopher simply describes the advance of spirit, or that Hegel was not only concerned to keep us on the move, but to explain and justify, though not to originate, a system of belief in which we can comfortably settle down.

Heidegger regards Hegel as an opponent, but a worthy opponent. As a worthy opponent, Hegel must be engaged in ontology, and endorse Heidegger's distinction between Being and beings. Heidegger introduces the Heideggerian words 'ontical', 'ontological' and 'pre-ontological', though adding that we must do this 'with caution and reservations'.⁴⁰ But Hegel is an opponent. In lectures on the *Phenomenology*, delivered twenty years earlier,⁴¹ Heidegger complained that when he interpreted Kant as Heideggerian, no one believed him, whereas Hegel is often wrongly seen as a proto-Heideggerian.⁴² So Heidegger distances Hegel from himself by associating Hegel with Descartes (Descartes the ontologist, *not* Descartes the epistemologist) rather than Kant. Heidegger wants to avoid being confused with Hegel, perhaps because of his affinity to Hegel. Above all, he wants to avoid being categorized as yet another neo-Kantian, and for this he needs to dissociate himself from the Hegelianism of such neo-Kantians as Cassirer.

Heidegger meets Cassirer

In their published works, Cassirer and Heidegger hardly mention each other. Heidegger reviewed Cassirer's book on *Mythical Thinking*, and says roughly that it is fine except that Cassirer does not deal with *Dasein*, the everyday life of birth, work and death.⁴³ In *The Phenomenology of Knowledge*, Cassirer says that what Heidegger says about space and time is fine, as far as it goes, but it deals with a more primitive level than Cassirer is concerned with.⁴⁴ The two met at a gathering of philosophers at Davos in Switzerland in 1929. Each stated his position in a lecture and this was followed by a debate. It has become something of a legend in the history of continental philosophy, as the battle of two great minds and their visions of philosophy, with Heidegger usually taken to have been the winner, but maybe more because of his rhetoric than because of the substance of what he said. The record of the lectures is rather skimpy, however, and the notes on the debate are hardly less so.⁴⁵ The debate turned primarily on the interpretation of Kant. But clearly deeper philosophical differences were at stake, and these are brought into sharper focus in Cassirer's extensive notes on Heidegger that were published posthumously in 1996.⁴⁶

In 1940 or thereabouts, after the dust of Davos had settled, Cassirer devised a typology of philosophy. He based this on three aspects of the self: 1) the I or ego itself. He calls this the I-phenomenon: the 'phenomenon of the "I," of the monas, of "life" itself';⁴⁷ 2) the phenomenon of action;⁴⁸ 3) the phenomenon of the work, the products we create.⁴⁹

Each of these basic phenomena is linked with a particular conception of knowledge and with a particular type of philosophy. The first, the phenomenon of the I, gives rise to Descartes, Bergson and Husserl. Husserl, he says, gives the 'most consistent statement of the pure-I aspect, of "transcendental idealism," in modern philosophy': 'The entire reality of things is swept aside, "put in brackets," ... All that remains is the reality of the stream of consciousness, of the "pure I," to which all so-called being, all truth is related and in which it is "founded"'.⁵⁰ The second phenomenon, action and the will, gives rise to Fichte, Nietzsche, Marx, William James, and Heidegger.

As soon as we enter this second type [Cassirer writes], every claim made in the name of the 'theory of knowledge' takes on [...] a completely different meaning and another colour. A marked example of this is the turn that phenomenology has taken from Husserl to Heidegger. [...] [H]ere the step is made from the first type (monadic theory of knowledge) to the second type (theory of will and action). Immediately, all the basic categories are changed: the pure I, 'being for itself', now becomes 'being in the world'. Intuition (the seeing of essences) disappears. 'Persistence in the self' becomes being driven to the outside, being driven forward. 'Dasein' falls into 'care', and so on.⁵¹

Finally, the phenomenon of the work gives rise to Plato and Kant. Kant does not start from the I, as Descartes did. He starts with the work, especially natural science, and tries to find its systematic 'form' and the 'conditions of its possibility'. Cassirer also squeezes Kant's ethics into this framework: Kant is seeking the conditions of the possibility of morality. The morality he presupposes is purely formal, liberated from the 'despotism of merely material aims, that is, from the despotism of mere action', and purified into 'simple contemplation, knowledge of the ought, knowledge of what duty "is"'. Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms continues Kant's project. 'It is pure "contemplation," not of a single form, but of all – the cosmos of pure forms – and it seeks to trace this cosmos back to the "conditions of its possibility"'.⁵²

Earlier, around 1928, Cassirer considered Heidegger in terms of the schema of life and spirit, *Leben* and *Geist*.⁵³ At Davos, Heidegger claimed to have a clearer idea of his own starting-point than Cassirer has of his, and Cassirer is indeed hazy about what underlies and generates the symbolic forms. Cassirer says that Heidegger starts from life, a special conception of life. Unlike Bergson, Heidegger was not much interested

in biology. His background was in religion and philosophy of religion. So he interprets life in a religious sense. Life is temporal, in time, but time for Heidegger is not long stretches of historical and pre-historical time. Time is rooted in the present. It is constituted by care – an idea that Heidegger owes to St Augustine – and by anxiety (*Angst*) – an idea he got from Kierkegaard – an anxiety arising from the prospect of one's own death. Though he was brought up as a Catholic and nurtured on Thomas Aquinas, Heidegger fell under the spell of Martin Luther and of philosophers congenial to Lutheranism such as Augustine and Kierkegaard. Cassirer quotes a passage about death: 'The challenge of death comes to us all, and no one can die for another. Everyone must fight his own battle with [the devil and] death by himself, alone. We can shout into one another's ears, but everyone must be prepared finally to meet death alone. I will not be with you then, nor you with me'. This sounds like Heidegger, but it is in fact Luther.⁵⁴ Heidegger's religion, Cassirer says, 'draws its power from the individualistic tendency it takes from Luther and Kierkegaard'.⁵⁵

Cassirer connects this individualism with Heidegger's aversion to inauthenticity, not doing one's own thing, but doing what 'they' or 'one' does and thinking what 'one' thinks. 'Everything "general"', Cassirer says, 'all giving in to the general is for Heidegger a "fall" – a disregarding of "authentic" *dasein* – a giving in to the inauthenticity of the "they"'.⁵⁶ For example, language is a general or universal thing, not the product or the possession of any one person. So for Heidegger language is a 'merely social phenomenon'. It does not embody reason. It 'hardens into mere "talk about," into superficial "idle talk." [...] Here giving in to the world of the "general" is again considered to be a mere looking away from oneself, a kind of "fall from grace"'.⁵⁷ Heidegger also treats history individualistically. For him, 'all historical understanding' is 'mere repetition, the bringing-up-again of personal *dasein*, personal destinies, personal fate'. The resolute individual scours the historic past to find a possibility for his own existence. For Heidegger the only meaningful thing is individual *Dasein*. 'History as the history of culture, the history of meaning, as the life of the objective spirit is *not* thereby disclosed'.⁵⁸

Something else that is inauthentic, in Heidegger's view, is the idea of infinite time. Authentic time, time as we primarily live it, ends with one's own death. This is what, in Cassirer's view, distinguishes Heidegger's account of time from Bergson's – that Heidegger stresses the future, anticipation of one's own death. Cassirer connects this with Heidegger's denial of 'eternal truths': 'for an entity that is in time and which passes away in time, there can be no eternal truths. The stigma of death is

impressed upon *everything* human – [...] The thought of “eternal truths” seems therefore to Heidegger almost as a kind of hybris, a reaching beyond human limits, ignoring the primary phenomena of death’.⁵⁹

Cassirer’s Hegelian alternative

This is how Cassirer sees Heidegger, and now Cassirer gives his own views. The ‘objective spirit and culture’, the ‘general’, the ‘impersonal’

does not consist merely in the pale, diluted social form of the average, the everydayness of the ‘they’, but in the form of transpersonal meaning. [...] [M]eaning is not exhausted by *dasein*; rather, ‘there is’ impersonal meaning which, of course, is only experienceable for an existing subject – for instance, mathematical meaning; there is objective meaning in the sense of significance (= ‘*Geist*’).⁶⁰

Against Heidegger, Cassirer upholds the ‘universal, *idealistic* meaning of religion and the idealistic meaning of history’. In this meaning, he finds ‘liberation and deliverance from the “anxiety” which is the signature, the basic “state-of-mind” of finite *Dasein*’.⁶¹ He quotes Schiller:

But free from the ravages of time ...
Would’st thou freely soar on her wings on high,
Throw off earthly dread.
Flee from narrow, stifling life
Into the realm of the ideal.

This is “‘life in the idea,” liberation from the ontological confinement and dullness of *Dasein*’. “‘World history” in no way means to enter into the mere objectivity of an impersonal “they” – “inauthentic historicity” [...] but rather, in Hegel’s sense, “the abode of the Idea [...]”.’ Not only *Dasein*, but meaning – the idea – is primordially historical’.⁶²

Infinite time is not inauthentic. Heidegger wrongly supposes that the only alternative to the finite time of a human life is the objective, physical time that Aristotle described. There is another alternative – the time of ‘*humanitas*’, humanity as a whole. For Heidegger, as an individualist, history is only ‘the totality of religious-individual destinies, each of which is irrationally thrown, dispersed in itself’.⁶³ Kant himself proposed an alternative to this when he said: ‘In man [...] those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not the individual’.⁶⁴ The true subject of

reason is not each man individually, but humanity as a whole. '[H]ere we take a stand', Cassirer declares, 'on the same ground as Hegel against Kierkegaard'.⁶⁵ The idea of 'humanitas' also allows us to accept eternal truths, whose contemplation is a refuge from the pain and anxiety involved in the life of Dasein. There is no individual immortality, except as we look at things, including ourselves, *sub specie aeternitatis*, under the aspect of eternity. We should develop *amor fati*, a 'love of fate', a stoical acceptance of things that has been recommended from antiquity down to Spinoza and Nietzsche. In this way 'life itself is raised above the realm of mere "care"'.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Cassirer's account of Heidegger is often disputable. It is not obvious that Heidegger disliked inauthenticity in the way Cassirer supposes or that Heidegger's philosophy allowed him 'no access' to the 'transpersonal'.⁶⁷ Let me take one particular problem. Heidegger notoriously said that 'before Newton's laws were discovered, they were not "true"'. He adds that this does not entail that 'the beings which they point out in a discovering way did not previously exist'. But he insists: 'That there are "eternal truths" will not be adequately proven until it is successfully demonstrated that Dasein has been and will be for all eternity'.⁶⁸ This passage shows two things. First, Heidegger's denial of eternal truths does not depend on individual mortality. Augustine argued that individual mortality would undermine eternal truths and, since there are eternal truths, we are immortal as individuals. But Heidegger does not make this connection. His problem with eternal truths is that to be true, they must be discovered, known, but if humans as a species are not eternal, then truths cannot be known for eternity, that is, they cannot be eternal truths. Second, Heidegger's claim that Newton's laws were not true before their discovery looks trivial when he adds that even before Newton beings may have existed in the way Newton claimed. 'Truth' for Heidegger does not mean what Cassirer meant by it. It means 'disclosed/opened up' and then it is simply obvious that Newton's laws were not true before he discovered them. It is also obvious that unless humanity exists eternally, there cannot be eternal truths in Heidegger's sense. It may be that Heidegger also holds a doctrine that is less trivial, namely, that Newton's laws are only true for us post-Newtonian (but pre-Einsteinian) humans. They were not true for the ancient Greeks; for them their quite different view of the world was true. Our view and the Greek view are not such that one is true and the other false. They are incommensurable. We are familiar

with this idea from T. S. Kuhn. But Heidegger probably owes it to Oswald Spengler, whose bestseller, *The Decline of the West*,⁶⁹ had many detractors, but two distinguished admirers – Heidegger and Wittgenstein. On either of these accounts, Heidegger believes that it is humans, with their unique temporality, who disclose and open up beings and thereby give rise to Being and make beings into a world, a significant whole. Cassirer calls this ‘Idealism’, but he probably misunderstood Heidegger’s terminology.⁷⁰ However, as we have seen, Heidegger is in no position to complain about being misinterpreted. So the two disputants at Davos, the champion of life or *Dasein* and the Hegelian champion of spirit, found it as hard to understand each other as we find it to understand either of them.

Notes

1. In Liebmann (2011). An excerpt from this is translated in Luft (2013).
2. Heidegger (1997) contains a brief history of the Marburg neo-Kantians in Appendix VI. Since the neo-Kantians were rather varied and very productive, my account fails to do complete justice to them. Rickert, for example, firmly denies that they focused on logic and epistemology to the exclusion of ontology and metaphysics: Rickert (1930), 15ff.
3. A complication here is that I myself am a thing-in-itself, and so is every other person, since what appearances appear *to* cannot be yet another appearance. I cannot therefore know myself as I am in myself (the transcendental subject), but only as I appear to myself (the empirical subject).
4. Kant (1998), Preface B, xxx.
5. The most significant neo-Kantian contribution to religious thought was Hermann Cohen’s *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* of 1919, translated as Cohen (1995).
6. Especially in Cohen (1871).
7. Cassirer (1957), xiv f.
8. Cassirer (1957), 3, 19, 40, 282.
9. A latter-day follower of Cassirer in this respect is Nelson Goodman (1978), who explicitly acknowledges a debt to Cassirer.
10. E.g. Cassirer (1996), 42–45, 62–65, 213–215, where he summarizes the work of Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944). He attributes the view that animals live with ‘complex qualities’, not with ‘things’, i.e. with the indefinite total situation, not the elements of the situation, to Hans Volkelt (1886–1964).
11. See Enc III, §§402, 405, 408. I discuss the individual world in Hegel (2007) 368, 385ff., 531f.
12. On average everydayness, see Heidegger (1962), 69f. (43f. of the German edition).
13. On the closedness of Hegel’s system and the objections raised against it by another German 20th century philosophy, Theodor W. Adorno, see Jonas (this volume).
14. See Cassirer’s account of the differences between himself and Heidegger below, and also my entry on ‘God and Theology’ in Inwood (1999), 80ff.

15. I follow the convention of capitalizing 'Being' when it translates the German '(das) Sein' and means roughly the 'existence' or 'nature' of things, but retaining the lower case 'being(s)' when it translates '(ein) Seiendes; das Seiende', 'something that is, a being, an entity; that which is, beings, entities'.
16. Heidegger (1950). With an initial capital, 'Introduction' refers to Hegel's short Introduction to the *Phenomenology*. With a lower case, 'introduction' refers to the whole of the *Phenomenology*, considered as an introduction to Hegel's philosophy.
17. D2/M74. My references to Hegel's Introduction supply the paragraph number of Dove's translation in Heidegger (1970) followed by Miller's paragraph number in PS. I usually follow the Miller translation, with occasional amendments of my own.
18. 2/36f. My references to Heidegger supply the paragraph number of Heidegger (1950), followed by the page number(s) of the translation, Heidegger (1970).
19. Even if Hegel's absolute is ultimately spirit, spirit need not be 'present to itself in the certainty of unconditional self-knowledge' (2/32), in a sense that would make Hegel's *Geist* a close relative of Descartes' *cogito*, the result of identifying the ego with the absolute. But when Hegel says e.g. that his opponents view 'cognition [...]' as the instrument to get hold of the Absolute' (D1/M73), he is surely using the word in his opponents' own neutral sense: 'reality', 'what there is', 'the thing-in-itself', etc. Over the next three paragraphs Hegel distances himself from the word 'absolute', saying that science must confer a meaning on it.
20. D1/M73.
21. 1/30.
22. Hegel says: 'Or, if by testing cognition, which we conceive of as a *medium*, we get to know the law of its refraction, it is again useless to subtract this from the end result. For it is not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself whereby truth reaches us, that is cognition; and if this were removed, all that would be indicated would be a pure direction or a blank space' (D1/M73). This implies, says Heidegger, that cognition is the light of truth shone on us by the absolute (1/30). But Hegel's point is again *ad hominem*: suppose that cognition is a medium and we try to discount the refraction of the ray that passes through it. Then we admit that cognition is not the medium nor the refraction, but the ray itself. The medium-view is incoherent.
23. D2/M74.
24. 2/32f.
25. 3/38f.
26. 3/41.
27. D5/M77.
28. 5/50ff.
29. D13/M85.
30. D6/M78.
31. Heidegger concedes that Hegel does not discuss the goal as a goal, but he sometimes quotes Hegel inaccurately. He says 'The force of the absolute that holds sway in experience "drives consciousness on to its true existence"' (16/138). What Hegel actually says is 'When it [viz. consciousness] drives itself on to its true existence [*Indem es zu seiner wahren Existenz sich*

- forttreibt*], it will arrive...' (D16/M89) – which is not strictly incompatible with Heidegger's interpretation but does nothing to support it.
32. D14–15/M86–87. Heidegger may be hampered by his belief that for Hegel 'Wissen', knowledge, means much the same as 'Bewusstsein', 'consciousness' (6/55). That is incorrect: '*das absolute Wissen*' with which the *Phenomenology* concludes can surely not be paraphrased as '*das absolute Bewusstsein*'. Heidegger again relies too much on the root meanings of these words at the expense of Hegel's actual usage.
 33. D4/M76 '*Aber die Wissenschaft darin, dass sie auftritt, ist sie selbst eine Erscheinung.*' Dove translates this as: 'But science, in making its appearance, is an appearance itself', which perhaps makes Hegel's meaning more explicit than Hegel does.
 34. 4/48.
 35. D6/M78.
 36. 6/65.
 37. 14/120.
 38. D14/M86.
 39. D6/M78.
 40. 13/105.
 41. Heidegger (1980).
 42. Heidegger (1980/1988), 147.
 43. Reprinted as Appendix II in Heidegger (1991), and translated in Heidegger (1997) as Appendix II.
 44. Cassirer (1957), 149n., 163n., 173n., and 189n.
 45. The record of Heidegger's lectures appears as Appendix III of Heidegger (1991) and is translated in Heidegger (1997) in Appendix III. Appendix IV in both volumes contains the notes on the debate.
 46. Cassirer (1996).
 47. Cassirer (1996), 138f.
 48. *Ibid.*, 139f.
 49. *Ibid.*, 141f.
 50. *Ibid.*, 171.
 51. *Ibid.*, 180f.
 52. *Ibid.*, 188f.
 53. In Cassirer's usage 'life' is roughly equivalent to Heidegger's 'Dasein'. On the contrast between life and spirit, see Cassirer (1949), though this focuses on Max Scheler rather than Heidegger.
 54. Luther (1943), 391.
 55. Cassirer (1996), 203.
 56. *Ibid.*, 201.
 57. *Ibid.*, 202.
 58. *Ibid.*, 202f.
 59. *Ibid.*, 206.
 60. *Ibid.*, 203.
 61. *Ibid.*
 62. *Ibid.*, 204. The lines are from Schiller's *Das Ideal und das Leben*, 'the Ideal and Life'.
 63. *Ibid.*, 205.

64. Kant (1963), 13. Cassirer notes, but dismisses, Herder's charge that such a view is 'Averroistic', implying that 'the whole human species possesses but one mind; and that indeed of a very low order' (Herder 1966, 226).
65. Cassirer (1996), 205.
66. Ibid., 208.
67. Ibid., 202.
68. Heidegger (1962), 269f. (226f. in the German edition).
69. Spengler (1922).
70. See Cassirer (1996), 201 on Heidegger's 'idealism'. A Dutch participant at Davos, Hendrik J. Pos, said that Cassirer and Heidegger speak completely different languages, which are hardly intertranslatable (Heidegger 1997, 201).

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7

Against 'Metaphysics Running Amok': Hegel, Adorno and the Ineffable

Silvia Jonas

Introduction: Adorno's vision

One of the most interesting strands of twentieth-century German philosophy is what has come to be known as the *Frankfurt School*, a group of philosophers and social scientists whose work revolved around the *Institute for Social Research*, which was founded at the University of Frankfurt am Main in 1923. The common interest of those scholars was a critical engagement with the philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Marx, but also Nietzsche, Freud and Weber, and an attempt to combine philosophy and social scientific research. The idea of 'Critical Theory' that is inextricably linked to the *Frankfurt School*, a new kind of social critique opposed to dogmatic forms of theory, was first established by Max Horkheimer in his 1937 essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*. The central claim of Critical Theorists is that it is impossible to understand the world and the society one lives in without taking into account the ideological context framing one's thought about that very society. Critical Theorists thereby put themselves into opposition to what they called 'dogmatic' or 'traditional' social theories, which they accuse of deriving (false) generalizations about the world by imitating the logico-mathematical methods of the natural sciences.

One of the most prominent members of the *Frankfurt School* is at the same time a thinker who engaged intensively with the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel: Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969). It is perhaps no exaggeration to claim that Adorno's work would not exist without the work of Hegel. He admired him greatly, and yet at the same time he was convinced that there was something fundamentally wrong with his philosophy. Moreover, in terms of their philosophical temperament

and vision, there are hardly two thinkers that could be more opposed than these two: Hegel is the thinker of a grand system that has often been seen as a prime example of philosophical megalomania, whereas Adorno's work, much of which is composed in the form of unsystematic, open-ended reflections and aphorisms, can be read as a defence of philosophical modesty.

Adorno's place in twentieth-century German philosophy is secured not only by his role in the *Frankfurt School*, but also by him being one of the most prominent critics of Karl Popper (1902–1994) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) as well as the teacher of Jürgen Habermas (*1929). He also produced a vast body of philosophical work in aesthetic theory (most notably with regard to music, being an active composer himself), moral philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics. This chapter, however, focuses on the latter two, his theoretical philosophy, which is the least well-known, yet one of the most fascinating aspects of his philosophical work. Moreover, it is in his theoretical philosophy that his reception of – and struggle with – Hegel's thought becomes most clearly visible.

Adorno's theoretical philosophy can be read as a definite rejection of all (philosophical or scientific) attempts to construct a closed conceptual system encompassing all aspects of reality. It is a demonstration of the fact that, in order to do justice to reality, philosophy has to be able to bear both contradiction and non-identity. This conviction underlies all of Adorno's philosophical efforts. The overarching question Adorno raises – on the background of Hegel's philosophical system – is the question of what can, and what cannot, be achieved by systematic conceptual analysis.

This chapter has three parts. The first part provides a rough outline of core aspects of Hegel's metaphysics. Particular attention is paid to his concept of 'determinate negation', the driving force behind his dialectics. The second part tracks Adorno's answer to Hegelian metaphysics, which revolves around his notion of the essentially ineffable 'Non-identical'. I elucidate Adorno's conviction that the Non-identical is that which philosophy necessarily tries (and necessarily fails) to capture. In the third part, I argue that the fact that Adorno assigns such a central role to the Ineffable not only constitutes an exemplary case of philosophical modesty but also marks the route to a kind of philosophy that genuinely transcends Hegelian thought.

Hegel's metaphysics

One of the most significant differences between Hegel's and Adorno's philosophical work is that Hegel's entire philosophy constitutes one

inclusive system, accommodating all branches of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of history, moral philosophy, etc., whereas Adorno, even though he aimed at a holistic engagement with the world, made a point of communicating his philosophical views in an entirely unsystematic, discontinuous fashion. His aversion to systematic philosophy originates in his conviction that every system, in virtue of subsuming the particular under the universal, prevents a genuine engagement with the particular.¹ Adorno's philosophical mission is to reject a conception of rationality restricted to mathematical and scientific standards, and to replace it with an expanded conception of rationality that leaves room for the experience of the Non-identical. In order to understand Adorno's concept of the Non-identical, it is necessary to first recall certain features of the Hegelian system.

Hegel's metaphysics are sometimes labelled 'absolute idealism'. What this means can only be understood against the background of Kant's transcendental idealism. Kant makes a distinction between the realm of *phenomena* and the realm of *noumena*. The 'noumenal world', as it is sometimes called, is conceived as containing *things-in-themselves* but is essentially inaccessible to human knowledge. The 'phenomenal world' consists of 'appearances', such as those objects given to us through our senses.

Kant argues for a combination of 'empirical realism', which preserves the ordinary independence and reality of objects of the world, with 'transcendental idealism', according to which the properties of objects of the world (like their causal powers and their spatial and temporal location) are determined by our minds. They are so determined because human understanding imposes 'categories' like causality and dependence, unity and plurality upon the manifold of experience.² Moreover, Kant argues that two forms of pure intuition structure our sensations into the experience of things in space³ and time⁴. Space and time are thus not features of the world as it is but they are *a priori* necessary conditions for any human experience whatsoever. The objects of ordinary experience are empirically real but transcendently ideal: they are not to be identified with anything that lies beyond, and thus transcends, the bounds of possible experience. Accordingly, Kant holds that the questions of metaphysics are legitimate questions only insofar as they do not relate to objects which transcend all possible experience. Therefore, if we want to avoid illusory and contradictory claims, we must restrict metaphysics to objects which can be intuited by us under the *a priori* conditions of space and time, which means that we have to forbid all attempts to make claims about things-in-themselves as well as about non-sensible objects like God, the soul, the world as a whole and so on.

Kant can thus be understood as endorsing two idealist claims: 1) the objects of our experience, and the framework in which those objects exist, exist dependently on something else; 2) this dependence results from some sort of action of the human mind.⁵

Hegel endorses only the first claim, i.e., that the objects of our experience depend for their existence on something else, and rejects the second claim, i.e., that it is the human mind which somehow determines the existence of the external world. Hegel criticizes Kant's irreconcilable separation between the realm of *noumena* and the realm of *phenomena*, and argues that a speculative identity between thought and being *can* actually be achieved in a positive fashion. How exactly does Hegel establish this identity? He establishes it through his notion of 'Ideas'. An Idea is the unity of a concept together with the reality of that concept:

The Idea is what is true *in and for itself*, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity. Its ideal content is nothing but the concept in its determinations; its real content is only the presentation that the Concept gives itself in the form of external thereness; and since this figure is included in the ideality of the Concept, or in its might, the concept preserves itself in it.⁶

Hegel's idealism is thus based on the assumption of a structural identity of the Absolute *qua* subject (mind) and the Absolute *qua* object (substance), which means that the distinction between *noumena* and *phenomena* has become obsolete. On this picture, what are the criteria for something to count as 'real'? There are at least two senses in which Hegel uses the term 'real'. One sense could be called the 'evaluative' sense of 'real'. The criterion for an object A to be 'real' in the evaluative sense is the correspondence between A and its concept. For example, a healthy, fully grown tree is 'real' in the evaluative sense because it corresponds to the concept of an tree, whereas a sick, stunted tree is not 'real' in the evaluative sense because it does not correspond to the concept of a tree. In this respect, Hegel adopts an Aristotelian stance on concepts.

In the second sense of 'real', however, which could be called the 'existential' sense, even a sick tree is 'real' because the criterion for being 'real' in the existential sense is determinacy rather than correspondence. Both sick and healthy trees stand in relations of material incompatibility to other objects and are therefore determinate in the sense of determinate negation. So in a way, a tree can be both real (in the existential sense) and unreal (in the evaluative sense).⁷ In what follows, I refer to the existential sense of 'real', whose criterion is determinacy.

According to Hegel, determinacy presupposes negation: material things and concepts are determinate only in virtue of a contrast with other material things or concepts respectively.⁸ For Hegel, the negation of both concepts and things does not simply consist in their being mutually exclusive in a formal, i.e., conceptual way, but rather in a materially robust way. As Robert Brandom puts it,

[o]ne understands items (for instance, propositions or properties) as determinate just insofar as one understands them as standing to one another in relations of material incompatibility.⁹

The negation of something determinate (of a 'reality') is just as determinate as the negated thing itself. In fact, something becomes determinate only by being negated, so that both the affirmation and the negation of a reality are equally determinate. This is because both of them stand in a relation of determinate negation, determining each other *by* being each other's negation. However, contrary to classical logic, the negation of the negation of something does not amount to its affirmation. In classical logic, which was the only available kind of logic at Hegel's time and is still the predominant kind of logic in contemporary philosophy, if P is negated, the result is $\neg P$, and if $\neg P$ is negated, we get P again. For Hegel, however, the negation of the negation amounts to the affirmation of something new, something on a meta-level.¹⁰ Hegel's work continuously displays this triadic structure of 'affirmation – negation – negation of negation (=affirmation of something new)'. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, one form of consciousness passes over into the next, in the *Science of Logic* one thought determination passes over into the next. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the process culminates in the highest form of consciousness 'absolute knowledge'; in the *Science of Logic*, the process culminates in the most complex thought determination, the 'absolute idea'.¹¹ In both cases, the dynamic link between the elements of Hegel's philosophical system is what he calls 'determinate negation'. I briefly sketch this process as outlined in the *Science of Logic*.

In the *Science of Logic*, which is concerned with 'thought determinations', Hegel starts out with 'being' as the thought determination which seems to be the most immediate, fundamental one characterizing any possible thought content.¹² However, reflection on the content of 'being', and the attempt to make its content explicit, reveal the fact that 'being', given that it lacks any qualitative determinacy, is completely indeterminate, or 'empty'. In this way, 'being' amounts to nothing. Nothing,

on the other hand, is completely indeterminate as well (given that it too lacks any qualitative determinacy), and so effectively 'becomes', or collapses back into 'being'. 'Being' and 'nothing' thus pass over into one another, and thereby constitute the concept of 'becoming'. When something 'becomes', it undergoes a transition from nothingness into being. In this sense, the third thought determination 'becoming' can be said to contain 'being' and 'nothing' as sublated aspects. Consequently, the thought determination 'becoming' has a more complex structure than the other two.¹³

From this point onwards, each element in Hegel's philosophical system is, as it were, 'generated' from its predecessor through determinate negation. In the end, at the final stage of this development, each element has its place in the Hegelian system; no element stands outside of it. It is this all-encompassing identity which Adorno criticizes as 'totalitarian' and against which he invokes the 'Ineffable'.¹⁴

Adorno's critique of Hegel and the ineffable non-identical

Adorno criticizes what he calls 'philosophy of origin' (*Ursprungsphilosophie*; sometimes called 'First Philosophy'),¹⁵ as the kind of philosophy responsible for a way of thinking which is based solely on a continuous reconfirmation of identity. In all forms of 'First Philosophy', something general and superordinate – be it thought or being, spirit or matter, subject or object – is posited as the 'First' principle, and everything else is then inferred from this 'First principle' as something secondary and subordinate. What is common to all such 'First principles' is that there is always a sense in which they both generate and determine the subordinate particulars. Adorno claims that the particular is thus reduced to an element of a collection of individuals that is ultimately identical to the Absolute (never mind how exactly the identity relations between Absolute and particular are spelled out in the end). The alternative Adorno proposes is an acknowledgement of the insurmountable Ineffable as the core of all philosophy.

While Hegel was convinced that all (significant) knowledge can be expressed in language, Adorno did not believe in definitions or conceptual analysis. He was very suspicious of language and acutely aware of its limits. As a result, he refuses to specify any goals for his philosophical work. More precisely, he points out that the only thing that might qualify as the central aim of philosophy is such that it can never be attained. He writes:

If philosophy can be defined at all, it is an effort to express things one cannot speak about, to help express the Non-identical despite the fact that expressing it identifies it at the same time.¹⁶

Adorno's entire philosophical work revolves, in one way or another, around this dilemma: philosophy ought to be concerned with what matters; however, what matters is essentially ineffable. And it is precisely this impasse which draws Adorno back to Hegel. This is because he thought that the philosopher who found the most appropriate way of dealing with this dilemma was Hegel. The fact that he credits Hegel with coming close to achieving a philosophical goal which is, by definition, impossible to achieve, shows Adorno's deep respect and admiration for Hegel's philosophical work. He writes the following about him:

Hegel attempts to [express the Ineffable]. Because it can never be said directly, because everything direct and unmediated is false – and therefore necessarily unclear in its expression – he tirelessly says it in mediated form. This is one reason why Hegel invokes totality, however problematic that concept may be. A philosophy that relinquishes this effort in the name of a temptingly mathematicized formal logic denies its own concept a priori – its intention – and a constitutive part of that intention is the impossibility that Wittgenstein and his followers have turned into a taboo of reason on philosophy, a taboo that virtually abolishes reason itself.¹⁷

Adorno thus credits Hegel with having understood what Wittgenstein and his followers (by which he basically slams all of the founders of analytical philosophy) failed to understand: the importance of the Ineffable for every philosophical endeavour. He is sympathetic to many aspects of Hegel's dialectic, notably the notion that man and world, spirit and nature, subject and object are aspects of a whole and as such, as it were, 'create' each other by being each other's antitheses.

However, what Adorno cannot endorse is Hegel's conviction that the development of this whole and its aspects ultimately results in an all-encompassing identity (which Hegel calls 'the Absolute' or 'Absolute Idea' or 'Absolute Spirit'). Rather, Adorno emphasizes the importance of that which *does not* fit into any holistic system. This is the core of his criticism of Hegel. Specifically, he accuses Hegel's dialectics of – as he writes in the *Negative Dialectics* – 'consistent

resolution of non-identity into pure identity'.¹⁸ In the *Three Studies on Hegel*,¹⁹ he writes:

The farewell to Hegel becomes tangible in a contradiction that concerns the whole, in one that cannot be resolved according to plan, as a particular contradiction. Hegel, the critic of the Kantian separation of form and substance, wanted a philosophy without detachable form, without a method to be employed independently of the matter, and yet he proceeded methodically.²⁰

Adorno suggests a modified dialectics that he calls 'negative dialectics' in order to distinguish it from the positive Hegelian project. The central goal of negative dialectics is 'to break the compulsion to achieve identity', thereby forcing us to acknowledge the importance of that which lies beyond the reach of concepts and words. He argues that the compulsion to achieve identity ought to be broken

by means of the energy stored up in that compulsion and congealed in its objectifications. In Hegel, this meaning won a partial victory over Hegel – although Hegel, of course, could not admit the untruth in the compulsion to achieve identity.²¹

It needs to be emphasized that it would be far too simplistic to say that Hegel's dialectic is an entirely positive enterprise. To the contrary, Hegel's dialectic has a negative stage as well. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel writes the following:

Reflection is initially the transcending of the isolated determinacy and a relating of it, whereby it is posited in relationship but is nevertheless maintained in its isolated validity. The dialectic, on the contrary, is the immanent transcending, in which the one-sidedness and restrict-edness of the determinations of the understanding displays itself as what it is, i.e. as their negation. That is what everything finite is: its own sublation. Hence, the dialectical constitutes the moving soul of scientific progression, and it is the principle through which alone *immanent coherence and necessity* enter into the content of science, just as all genuine, nonexternal elevation above the finite is to be found in this principle.²²

It is not this stage of Hegel's system which Adorno attacks but the next stage, which Hegel calls the 'speculative' stage and which 'apprehends

the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the affirmative that is contained in their dissolution and in their transition'.²³ In the Addition to § 82, Hegel concludes:

As we have seen, however, the abstract thinking of the understanding is so far from being something firm and ultimate that it proves itself, on the contrary, to be a constant sublating of itself and an overturning into its opposite, whereas the rational as such is rational precisely because it contains both of the opposites as ideal moments within itself. Thus, everything rational can equally be called 'mystical'; but this only amounts to saying that it transcends the understanding. It does not at all imply that what is so spoken of must be considered inaccessible to thinking and incomprehensible.²⁴

It is precisely this latter point which Adorno rejects so persistently, that Hegel's insistence that even those things which transcend our understanding can be captured dialectically, and can be dissolved into something positive, something unmysterious that we can comprehend and have thoughts about. Adorno's point is not to simply cut out that speculative stage of Hegel's dialectic while keeping the negative one. Rather, he wants to show that even after going through all stages of Hegel's dialectic, there remains an aspect of reality that escapes our conceptual grasp entirely: the Non-identical.

Human reason, Adorno argues, *imposes* unity and identity on objects in the world, thus suppressing their uniqueness and making equivalent what is essentially non-equivalent. It is worth noting at this point that Adorno's critique is not confined to theoretical metaphysics alone, but has a straightforward and practical application: according to him, identitarian thinking is one of the root causes of why societies become totalitarian, the implication being that it was a totalitarian society which made Auschwitz possible. Adorno, the son of an assimilated Jew, had to spend much of his life in exile, from where he observed the barbarism of the totalitarian Nazi state. The rejection of identitarian thinking was therefore far more than a theoretical exercise for him; it had a deeply existential dimension.

In contrast to Hegel's dialectic, which creates an idealist system capable of sublating every possible contradiction into identity, Adorno considers the world to be inextricably contradictory and 'disrupted'. Only a non-idealist, non-positive dialectic like his negative dialectics does justice to this fact. Two of the most important characteristics of his negative dialectic are its non-reductionist character and its emphasis of the

particular as prior to the universal. Adorno proposes a way of thinking in which *aporia*, contradiction and paradox are both acknowledged as irresolvable and incorporated in one's reflection about thought. This must be done *without* a lingering aim of resolving contradictions into identity. He writes in the *Negative Dialectics*:

The negative motive of identitarian philosophy has remained in force: nothing particular is true; no particular is itself, as its particularity requires. Dialectical contradiction is neither the mere projection on the thing of a concept formation that miscarried nor a metaphysics running amok. Experience forbids the resolution in the unity of consciousness of whatever appears contradictory.²⁵

Adorno considers negative dialectics to be the only consistent way of understanding what dialectic means, namely: neither to hypostatize the subject, nor the object, nor their relation to one another.²⁶ Rather, they must be understood as mutually related, mutually mediated aspects. Aspects of what? Aspects of the Non-identical, of that which resists our conceptual grasp.

Adorno thus demands that human reason acknowledge the Non-identical that becomes apparent in the contradictions of our thought without attempting to conceptualize it and thereby annulling all prior efforts.

Conclusion: the significance of the ineffable

However, even though we may understand that asking this question is futile and misguided, we nevertheless cannot help but ask it: what exactly is this mysterious 'Non-identical'? Even if it cannot be expressed, there must be some way for us to understand what Adorno has in mind. The following quote from the beginning of the second part of the *Negative Dialectics* may help to elucidate Adorno's idea:

There is no Being [Sein] without entities [Seiendes]. 'Something' – as a cogitatively [denkfähig] indispensable substrate of any concept, including the concept of Being – is the utmost abstraction of the subject-matter that is not identical with thinking, an abstraction not to be abolished by any further thought process. Without 'something' there is no thinkable formal logic, and there is no way to cleanse this logic of its metalogical rudiment. The supposition of an absolute form, of 'something at large' that might enable our thinking to shake off that subject-matter, is illusory.²⁷

The Non-identical, I submit, is the very foundation of thought; it is that which makes intelligible thought about the world possible in the first place.²⁸ We derive our conceptual language from the Ineffable, and we do this through a quasi-aesthetic activity of giving expression to the ways in which the world appears meaningful to us. As I understand Adorno, the ineffable 'Non-identical' neither marks a distinct class of objects of perception, nor a relation between a subject and a certain class of objects of perception. It marks a mode of direct *experience* which is caused by a shift in our perception through which the subjectivity of our experience becomes the focus of our awareness (we get directly acquainted with our subjectivity).²⁹ This mode of experience is characterized by the fact that its object is not an empirical fact, but our own subjectivity.

Pace Hegel, there is a non-conceptual ground to philosophy which cannot itself be made part of the philosophical apparatus. Philosophy can point towards it, but it cannot analyse, dissolve or encompass it. In contrast to Hegelian, and much other philosophy, Adorno holds that it is the 'particular', not the 'universal', that comes first – and that it goes beyond anything that we can meaningfully express in thought or language. The 'particulars' in question cannot be reduced to mere epiphenomena or ephemeral additions to some basic logical structure of reality. All philosophy that forgets or denies this fact, Adorno seems to be saying, runs the risk of becoming as totalitarian as Hegelian philosophy.

This diagnosis raises questions not only for Hegelian philosophy, but also for contemporary philosophy. In concluding this chapter, I attend to the question of what might be the relevance of the Ineffable for contemporary (analytic) philosophy.

According to Adorno, Enlightenment has turned human rationality into a purely instrumental tool, privileging instrumental kinds of knowledge (i.e., scientific and technological knowledge) in order to manipulate and control nature.³⁰ This fact is mirrored in philosophical thought as well. Philosophy has been reduced to conceptual analysis: thinking conceptually means subsuming particulars under universal concepts. Identifying particulars as instances of general concepts is the main characteristic of instrumental rationality. Particulars are thus made identical to their universal concepts and become substitutable for one another. Thought has thereby degenerated into what Adorno calls 'identity-thinking'. The way Adorno sees it, conceptual thought is a form of mastery, a form of enslaving the particular in favour of the concept, and this enslavement translates into real life (Adorno writes this, of course, with the Holocaust in mind). Thus, it becomes clear why Adorno

emphasizes the importance of the Ineffable, that which cannot be identified by means of conceptual thought: it is the only way of resisting the enslaving force of language.

Now one could argue that, given that language is so utterly flawed, there is no point in engaging in philosophical thought at all. Why does Adorno not simply tell us to give up on philosophy altogether? The reason, I think, why Adorno does not come to such a radical conclusion is that he is convinced that philosophy, despite the shortcomings of language, can help to provide access to the Ineffable by enabling ineffable insights.³¹ Despite its instrumental character, conceptual thought points beyond itself. What does it mean for a conceptual thought to point beyond itself?

Robert Pippin suggests that the pointing of language beyond itself consists in an omnipresent asterisk, so that, as it were, the concepts we employ in language carry a warning saying: 'Caution: Concepts just used not adequate to the sensuous particulars that fall under them'.³² However, I think this is an unfair reduction of what Adorno wants to say. He does not merely want to draw our attention to the fact that we can never get to know objects through description in the way we can get to know them through acquaintance. I think it is a more accurate depiction of Adorno's thought that someone whose rationality is willing to acknowledge the Ineffable can, through the application of our ordinary concepts, gain an ineffable insight into something that exceeds conceptualization. It is an insight into the limits of our thought and of our conceptual resources.

Just like Wittgenstein, Adorno has strong reservations about what language can achieve. However, whereas Wittgenstein simply declares that some things are off the limits of language and thus, there is no point in trying to talk about them,³³ Adorno insists that language itself draws our attention towards the limits of its expressive capacity. The Non-identical can never be integrated into a system of discursive relations, but it can appear in the dialectical movement of thought. Consequently, he calls for a way of thinking and writing philosophy that recognizes a limit to what is rationally articulable in language. The Ineffable is accessible only if we acknowledge the gap between what language says and what language wants to say. Acknowledging the Ineffable leads to an awareness of the inadequacy of language and thought. As such, it is the very condition of critical thought.

Many contemporary analytical philosophers might be surprised to find that they share a fundamental conviction with Hegel: their complete trust in the possibility to fully grasp reality and to force a conceptual

harness onto it. In this sense, Adorno's critique of Hegel is not only relevant to research on Hegelian philosophy, but also to all contemporary analytical philosophy: his concern with the Ineffable is a call for philosophical modesty and a reminder both of the limitations of human thought, and of the impossibility of ever 'getting it' entirely right. At the same time, Adorno's philosophy provides a justification and explanation for all future philosophy: precisely because our conceptual capacities are fundamentally flawed, and precisely because we know that we will never be able to attain 'the truth' or 'the good' in any pure form, we should continue our efforts, not only in order to get as close as possible to an ultimately unattainable truth, but also in order to continue to become aware of our limitations and hence, to prevent intellectual hubris.

Notes

1. This applies to particulars of all sorts: particular objects as well as particular events, particular experiences, etc.
2. Kant 1998 [1787], B106.
3. Kant 1998 [1787], B37ff.
4. Kant 1998 [1787], B46ff.
5. Wartenberg (1999), 104.
6. Enc I, §213.
7. Hegel does not say anything about fictional objects, but it is reasonable to think that fictional objects such as unicorns can also be real in the evaluative sense while being unreal in the existential sense. Thanks to Michael Inwood for pointing this out to me.
8. Hegel endorses Spinoza's opinion that all determination is negation (cf. Spinoza 1995, Letter 50), without, however, endorsing Spinoza's view that reality is a fundamentally indeterminate substance.
9. Brandom (2002), 179.
10. In the twentieth century, defenders of intuitionistic logic such as Arend Heyting have adopted the view that the negation of the negation of P is not equal to P; cf. Heyting (1956).
11. Being on the highest level of determination, absolute knowledge and absolute idea themselves do not negate anything else. They are, as it were, all-inclusive, i.e., every negation is internal to them. It is precisely this aspect of Hegel's system, the ultimate dissolution of negation, that Adorno rejects vehemently (see the following).
12. SL 21.68ff.
13. SL 21.69f.
14. Besides calling it 'the Ineffable' and 'the Non-identical', Adorno also refers to it as 'the Unsayable', 'the Nonconceptual', 'the Unrepresentable', 'the Inexpressible', 'the Other', 'Otherness', etc. I refer to it either as the 'Ineffable' or the 'Non-identical'. It should be added that, of course, identifying the Non-identical necessarily falsifies it, which is why no further definition is provided.

15. Adorno (1982).
16. Adorno (1993), 102.
17. Adorno (1993), 102. Cf. for example Wittgenstein (2003) [1922], §§2.171; 4.12–4.121; 7.
18. Adorno (1973), 402.
19. Adorno (1993).
20. Adorno (1973), 148.
21. Adorno (1973), 157.
22. Enc I, §81.
23. Enc I, §82.
24. Enc I, §82Z.
25. Adorno (1973), 152.
26. For yet another interpretation of dialectics and dialectical movement, see the discussion of the contrast between Heidegger's dialectics and his interpretation of Hegelian dialectics in Inwood (this volume).
27. Adorno (1973), 135.
28. I provide an elaborate account of the metaphysics of ineffability in my doctoral dissertation *A Separate Reality: Enquiry into the Nature of Ineffability* (2012).
29. There is an interesting connection between this view and F. H. Bradley's monistic views as expounded in his *Appearance and Reality*, most notably with the notion that what cannot be *thought* can nevertheless be *felt*. Cf. Mander (this volume) for a discussion of Bradley's view and other Neo-Hegelian accounts.
30. Cf. Horkheimer/Adorno (2002).
31. Finlayson (2002). It is worth noting at this point, however, that in order to be able to have these insights, one must in the first place be ready to acknowledge that they are there to be had, which is something many contemporary philosophers tend to ignore.
32. Pippin (2005), 105.
33. This characterization applies, in different ways, both to the early and the later Wittgenstein.

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8

The Critique of Non-Metaphysical Readings of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

David P. Schweikard

Introduction

The questions whether social or political philosophy should be explicitly grounded in metaphysical theory, and whether it is plausible to propose answers to central problems of political philosophy without explicating one's metaphysical assumptions, are still current in systematic discussions more than 180 years after Hegel's death. In this chapter, I intend to show that quite contrary stances towards these questions make for a division of the present-day reception of Hegel's political philosophy. Representatives of the two camps I refer to agree that Hegel held the view that social and political theorizing form parts of a systematic philosophical enterprise that encompasses, and is ultimately grounded in, a metaphysical conception. What divides them is the issue of how to deal with the foundational role of metaphysics that extends to Hegel's practical philosophy.¹ In the following, I take a closer look at one particular instance: Axel Honneth's (born 1949) outline of what he takes to be the best feasible approach to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Honneth, one of the leading scholars in the tradition of 'Critical Theory' who had already drawn on the young Hegel in his *The Struggle for Recognition*², has since then turned to the mature Hegel's political philosophy as a source of inspiration. More specifically, he aims at re-appropriating central Hegelian claims without taking on board Hegel's metaphysical presuppositions. Apart from discussing basic features of this approach to Hegel, I also offer a sketch of an alternative approach according to which invoking precisely those presuppositions can play an informative role for both an interpretation and a re-appropriation of Hegel's thought.

This constellation of opposing views is not specific to Hegel scholarship. Jean Hampton, for instance, in engaging with Rawls' 'Justice as

Fairness – Political, Not Metaphysical’, asks the programmatic question ‘Should Political Philosophy Be Done without Metaphysics?’ and suggests that Rawls’ justificatory method underscores the aims of political thought by not showing its colours regarding the most fundamental normative and metaphysical assumptions.³ Even in defending the principle of toleration and the idea of an overlapping consensus about principles of justice, as Hampton argues in direct reference to Rawls, the political philosopher should still take a stand on the most pressing moral and political issues, instead of retreating to the proposal of guidelines for achieving political stability within a society. Hampton’s general point is that what is expected from political philosophers is a justification of the most fundamental principles, of what they are, how they come about and how they interconnect. Her critique is not aimed at political liberalism, but at Rawls’ method for establishing the core claims of his version thereof.

In view of Honneth’s reading of Hegel, I do not seek – in analogy to Hampton’s criticism of Rawls – to devaluate the view he develops on the basis of the passage through the *Philosophy of Right* he offers, but I do seek to formulate some basic critical points regarding the method he applies. I take Hampton’s methodological point to raise important issues for practical philosophy quite generally. First, it touches on our understanding of the nature and purpose of political philosophy; here it could be demanded that political philosophers should themselves be political at times and not confine their reflections to procedural matters. And second, it brings to the fore the question as to what is required of an argument in political philosophy. Suppose we want to defend an account of political freedom and set out to argue that the realization of such freedom requires there to be self-conscious agency, mutual recognition, embedment in social community, a stable and legitimate institutional structure and a legal system that both endows every citizen with legal rights and imposes only justified obligations on them. What sort of argumentation would be required to support such an account? Could there be a purely political argument that ties together and provides a foundation for all these elements? What would a justification of these normative claims need to include?

A treatment of such general questions concerning the nature of political philosophy is beyond the scope of this contribution. However, a look at the aforementioned controversy about how to approach Hegel’s practical philosophy can serve to shed light on these methodological and, to some extent, strategic issues. I take Hegel to be defending a conception of freedom roughly in line with the one previously sketched; he

expounds this conception as embedded in a philosophical system that he takes – and intends – to be comprehensive. Because this system is, in a sense to be qualified more carefully, expressive of a holistic metaphysics, his conception is *a fortiori* to be viewed as a metaphysical conception of political freedom. This poses problems for those who want to affiliate their political thought with Hegel's and, at the same time, shun not only Hegelian metaphysics but metaphysical commitments altogether. If such affiliation with, or re-appropriation of, Hegel's thought is not to be had without also accepting Hegel's own systematic claims that exceed the political, their attempts are in danger of grasping at nothing.

In the following, I pick out one example of recent Hegel scholarship, Axel Honneth's *Suffering from Indeterminacy*,⁴ in which these methodological problems are addressed and dealt with in roughly the way outlined above.⁵ Honneth seeks to re-establish the up-to-dateness of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, but holds that this can only be done when some of its metaphysics-laden concepts and claims are jettisoned. Consequently, he offers a *non-metaphysical* reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. I first reconstruct the main features of Honneth's reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and the critique of a metaphysically grounded practical philosophy it implies. Beyond this, my aim is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of this reading, which is set out as a re-appropriation or even adaptation of some elements of Hegel's practical philosophy. Therefore, in a second step, I concentrate on and criticize Honneth's interpretation of Hegel's conception of the will, which is apt to be contrasted with an alternative reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* that neither shuns its metaphysical foundation nor implies commitment to the entire body of Hegelian metaphysics.

Honneth's non-metaphysical re-appropriation of the *Philosophy of Right*

Before we turn to Honneth's reading of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, it is helpful to map the main options for dealing with Hegel's practical philosophy in light of its embedment in Hegel's philosophical system.⁶ For the time being, we can characterize this embedment in the following way: Hegel's philosophical system is laid out in his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* that is divided into the *Science of Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Spirit*. As he puts it in §18 of the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, he regards 'the whole of science' as the 'presentation of the idea', where the three parts represent guises of the idea as the fundamental category. The *Philosophy of Spirit* is the

part that comprises condensed expositions of Hegel's anthropology, philosophy of mind,⁷ his social and political philosophy, his philosophy of history and culture, as well as his account of the *Gestaltungen* of Absolute Spirit in art, religion and philosophy itself. Referring to the second subdivision of this part, entitled 'The Objective Spirit' (§§483–577), Hegel states that he could here be briefer than in the other parts, since he had explored this part of the system in the *Philosophy of Right*.⁸ The crucial point about this sort of embedment of the *Philosophy of Right* in Hegel's system is that overall claims made and defended especially in the *Science of Logic*⁹ are operative also in the later part that is the doctrine of Objective Spirit. This applies to concepts such as that of the 'idea' and methodological instructions used or referred to in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Given this close relation between Hegel's social and political philosophy, as expounded in the *Philosophy of Right*, and the rest of the system, we can immediately distinguish between a reading that seeks to defend Hegel's analyses of social phenomena and his normative claims head on, embracing their foundation in the *Logic*, and a reading that blinds out this foundation and focuses on Hegel's more narrowly practical philosophy.¹⁰ One would expect that whereas the first strategy is open to the sort of criticism of metaphysics voiced in different schools of political philosophy prominent in the twentieth century, the second strategy is precisely in line with the mainstream of present-day social and political philosophy alluded to at the outset.

As becomes clear presently, Axel Honneth's *Suffering from Indeterminacy* exemplifies the second sort of engagement with Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. I should add that the dialogue I seek with Honneth is limited in two respects. First, Honneth's book is intended to provide an interpretation and reconstruction of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1821). This involves an account of the *organization* of that work I do not take issue with in concentrating on Honneth's understanding and adaptation of Hegel's social philosophy. Second, I do not attempt to contribute to Honneth-exegesis, for example by scrutinizing his earlier or later work on Hegel or his other work in social philosophy. What I do, however, is to engage with Honneth's reading of Hegel as it is indicated by the subtitle of his book, in which it is described as a '*Reaktualisierung*' of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Here I leave the central term of the subtitle, *Reaktualisierung*, in German; it is worth remarking that this is description of Honneth's aim is a term of art, which expresses the project of 'reviving', or 'showing the seemingly lost systematic relevance' of, or 'updating', Hegel's seminal work. My

focus is on Honneth's strategy for interpreting Hegel in light of this aim, and I indicate where I agree and where I disagree with Honneth's proposal.

According to Honneth, any attempt at re-establishing the relevance of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* confronts a political and a methodological objection. The *political objection* concerns 'anti-democratic consequences', because in the *Philosophy of Right*, as Honneth puts it, 'individual rights to freedom are subjected to the ethical authority of the state'.¹¹ A *methodological objection* is put forth against the argumentative structure of Hegel's work, in which, as previously outlined, justificatory steps are linked back to the *Logic*. But, Honneth continues, the *Logic* 'is by now completely incomprehensible to us due to its ontological concept of Spirit'.¹²

In light of these objections, Honneth holds that a *Reaktualisierung* can proceed either directly or indirectly. The *direct strategy* would consist in criticizing both objections as misunderstandings with the aim of 'updating [the *Philosophy of Right*] according to its own methodological standards and, at the same time, of rehabilitating Hegel's concept of the state'.¹³ By contrast, the *indirect strategy* would serve a 'considerably more modest aim' and consist in showing that the two objections are irrelevant to 'any really productive re-appropriation of the work'.¹⁴ This latter strategy would serve the aim of showing 'that the intention and the basic structure of [Hegel's] text can today be productively reconsidered, even when neither the substantialist concept of the state nor the operative instructions of the *Logic* play an explanatory role'.¹⁵ Honneth notes that the direct strategy is problematic, for it risks 'preserving the substance of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* only at the cost of underscoring our post-metaphysical standards of rationality'. But the indirect strategy is also problematic, since, while being an attempt at 'clearing up Hegel's text', it runs the danger of 'sacrificing the actual substance of the work'.¹⁶

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Honneth opts for the latter, the indirect strategy. Alluding to attempts at constructive re-appropriations of Hegel's thought by members of the so-called Ritter-school (mainly in the 1950s and 1960s),¹⁷ he says that his main reason for being critical of, and ultimately rejecting, the direct strategy is that to him it seems impossible to *rehabilitate* Hegel's concept of the state or Hegel's ontological concept of Spirit. Thus Honneth's own approach is meant to provide an interpretation of the intention and the organization of the *Philosophy of Right* that refers neither to the methodological instructions from the *Logic* nor to the foundational and substantialist conception of the state. Honneth's

aim is to demonstrate the relevance of Hegel's work by showing that it can be read as a normative theory of spheres of reciprocal recognition whose creation and stabilization is constitutive of the moral identity of modern societies.

Thus, Honneth's overall goal is to establish (or re-establish) the relevance of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. While he acknowledges that logico-metaphysical commitments as well as specific conceptions of Spirit and of the state are somewhat central to Hegel's work, he excludes them from the set of elements it is possible to update or re-appropriate. What is supposed to vindicate the relevance of Hegel's work is that it can be read as developing an account of spheres of recognition that constitute the moral character of modern societies. But one could object already at this stage that, given that the elements Honneth takes to be impossible to rehabilitate are central to the way Hegel himself conceived of his work, why does Honneth not develop an account of social life without referring to Hegel? While the relationship between Hegel's *Logic* and the other parts of the system is indeed notoriously complex, it is more or less obvious from a great number of remarks throughout the *Philosophy of Right* that Hegel regards the logico-metaphysical foundation as indispensable for his practical philosophy.¹⁸ In §31 of the *Philosophy of Right*, towards the end of the Introduction, Hegel makes clear that the method of a (in his sense) scientific development of the concept of right is to be the method developed in the *Logic*.¹⁹ So the question becomes: how could Honneth's account of that work still be an *interpretation* of the *Philosophy of Right*?

An all-or-nothing choice?

Honneth's decision to leave aside the logico-metaphysical dimension of Hegel's practical philosophy is particularly interesting, because it seems to offer a viable engagement with Hegel, one that serves the purpose of reviving what is living in Hegel.²⁰ The systematicity of Hegel's philosophy, its coherentist, monistic holism with the determinations of the *Logic* at the basis, seem to provoke an *all-or-nothing* choice.²¹ A true and consistent Hegelian would have to say that the character of Hegel's system does not allow for extraction or appropriation of single claims, because each one derives its justification from nothing less than the entire system of claims. Thus, if we reject one, this imagined Hegelian would say, we have to reject them all. Honneth disagrees and suggests adopting the stance according to which there are claims that should not

be dismissed, because they can be framed in a way independent of the logical foundation Hegel presents them to have.

Together with a different group of Hegel scholars I partly agree with Honneth.²² I agree with Honneth's rejection of the *all-or-nothing* choice: it is not the case that one simply cannot make sense of any of Hegel's views without accepting the entire framework in which they are developed and the connection Hegel takes them to have. But this agreement is only partial in the sense that I disagree with the diagnosis that the choice has to come with an outright dismissal of the *logical* foundation. Honneth's decisive assumption seems to be that in what he calls 'our post-metaphysical age', overtly alluding to a Habermasian programme,²³ it is no more feasible to uphold and cash out the encompassing account of Reason or Spirit Hegel developed. The positive side of this assumption is a conception of rationality that ties principles to universalizable results of public discourse, one that requires a kind of communication and interaction within spheres of recognition.²⁴

An alternative reaction to the *all-or-nothing* choice would consist in the attempt of appropriating claims and arguments, accounts of the structure of certain phenomena and argumentative strategies from Hegel's philosophy without shunning their foundation in the *Logic*. As for the account of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) that Honneth wants to appropriate, the question becomes whether it cannot be had without dismissing, but by *explicating*, its foundation in the *Logic* as a structural analysis. The crucial question here is whether reference to logical categories in the *Philosophy of Right* are read as explanatory or as justificatory.

For Honneth, there are two main theoretical elements of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* any plausible appropriation has to incorporate.²⁵ First, the intuitions Hegel attached to the notion of 'Objective Spirit' imply the claim that all social reality has a rational structure that is violated when wrong or insufficient conceptions are realized. And second, the multiple reasons for introducing the concept of ethical life imply the claim that modern society is characterized by spheres of action in which individual tendencies and moral norms, interests and values are fused in forms of institutionalized interaction.

Hegel's analysis of the structure of the will in different readings

This description of the retainable elements informs Honneth's interpretation. I now turn to his account of Hegel's analysis of the will – which is *the* central concept and regional principle in Hegel's doctrine

of Objective Spirit, and is presented in the *Philosophy of Right* – to show how he proceeds. The analysis of the will, which is for Hegel the ‘precise location and point of departure’ for exploring the ‘basis [Boden] of right’²⁶, provides an excellent example, for in §§5–7 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel overtly carries out this analysis using the *logical* categories of universality, particularity and individuality. For Hegel, these are ‘moments’ of the will.

Honneth reads Hegel’s analysis as a discussion of modern conceptions of autonomy and regards the first two stages as expressions of incomplete conceptions that guide insufficient normative ideals. He takes the first conception, expressed as the will’s ‘*pure indeterminacy*’²⁷, to over-emphasize the individual’s capacity for self-determination by way of abstracting from its particular tendencies, needs and desires. Next, he takes the second conception, expressed as ‘the absolute moment of the *finitude* or *particularization* of the “I”’,²⁸ to be restricted to the capacity of a reflected choice between alternatives. On Honneth’s reading, Hegel rejects these conceptions as incomplete, because they cannot be used to spell out the idea that the realization of individual choices needs to be conceived of an expression and confirmation of individual freedom in contexts where the object of choice allows individual choice to be experienced as self-determination. The key to this conception is, according to Honneth, a passage in a lecture note (*Zusatz*) to §7 in which Hegel illustrates the process of *being oneself in another*, with respect to love and friendship. On this interpretation, communication is the key to self-determination in the public domain.²⁹ It is, this account holds, only by way of mutual recognition in (or within spheres of) communication that individuals can achieve meaningful self-determination as well as social and political freedom.

Although I am inclined to agree with the overall thrust of this interpretation – and especially with the view that social dynamics of recognition constitute the basis of the realization of freedom – I think this view can be arrived at without blinding out the logical categories of Hegel’s exposition. What is more, an alternative reading that does not set aside this foundation is more suitable as an *interpretation* of Hegel’s work. It is in this respect that I intend to formulate a critique of Honneth’s non-metaphysical reading of Hegel.

Let us thus take a look at a different way of reconstructing Hegel’s analysis of the will as a basic principle of a holistic social philosophy and an account of political freedom.³⁰ On the face of it, the will may appear to be an atomistic principle. But a definition of the will merely in the sense of an individual capacity is just what Hegel did not imply.

The will does include the element of freedom of choice, the one-sided abstraction from particular acts that Hegel calls universality.³¹ As such, the will is indeterminate and confronts a host of possible contents. Choosing among them is what Hegel calls '*particularization of the "I"*',³² through which a subject constitutes itself by virtue of his own decision. However, the basic structure of the will is described through the category of 'individuality',³³ which Hegel intends to be understood 'not in its immediacy as a unit – such as the individuality of our common idea [*Vorstellung*] – but rather in accordance with the concept of individuality'.³⁴

According to Hegel, one cannot conceptualize the overall constellation 'universal-particular-individual' ['Allgemeines-Besonderes-Einzernes']³⁵ by starting from the universal moment as a formal base that either generates contents out of itself or absorbs prescribed contents and puts them in a rational order of preferences. Nor should one try to justify the moment of self-consciousness inductively from natural instincts or inclinations. Both general self-consciousness and concrete, prescribed contents are described by Hegel as incidents reliant on a complex structure, which only occur through isolation and are therefore both described as 'abstract negativity'.³⁶ These are, according to Hegel, ontologically dependent, though not thereby unreal or normatively meaningless, moments of the individuality that manifests the basic structure of the concept itself. This detail is not an addition to the moments of 'universality' and 'particularity', but the inclusive connection between those other two moments. As Hegel present it, this relationship must itself be suitably secured, i.e., it must represent the internal structure of both moments and the overall structure at one and the same time. This is only possible when the moments of 'universality' and 'particularity' exhibit a suitable inner structure, i.e., when they contain internally suitable representations of the overall structure and their own function in this overall structure. Only when individuals conscious of their freedom of choice (the moment of 'universality') with the ethical whole (the moment of 'individuality') in view decide freely in favour of contents (the moment of 'particularity') that are adequate and self-generated contents of the will, i.e., legal, moral and ethical claims – only then is their autonomy or freedom fully realized. In order for this to succeed, a society must be suitably structured, i.e., differentiated in social subsystems, each with specific forms of recognized and thus legitimately asserted claims. Only in a social world thus furnished is it possible for autonomous individuals to comprehend themselves at the same time as free instances of an ethical society.

This account of the concept-logical constitution of the will qua concept, which can be read as an explication of the basic metaphysical structure of intentional and social phenomena,³⁷ implies the idea that there are manifold dependencies between the interdependent 'moments' and the whole. It is because of these dependencies of the parts among themselves, and between the parts and the whole, that Hegel's social philosophy proves to be holistic. Autonomy, as verified by the basic structure of the will, is not primarily a property that is intrinsic to concrete individuals because of their rational constitution. In fact, autonomy signifies a sensibly structured society in which the various legitimate claims are classified in groups, and differentiated and recognized according to their rationale and forms of validity.

Honneth could accept these results of this alternative interpretation, but he would be unwilling to endorse its method. But the advantage of this way of interpreting Hegel is that it takes into account the logical categories used in the text. These are not formal directions for the analysis of the will (or other concepts), but viewed by Hegel as constitutive aspects, i.e., aspects that constitute the will when it is fully realized. For Hegel, it is this basic structure of the will that is characteristic not just of individual self-consciousness and its intersubjective dimension (as Honneth has it), but it is also the defining feature of social formations and the criterion for the assessment of social institutions. According to Hegel, phenomena within the sphere of Spirit, most importantly social communities (such as the family or guilds) and institutions (such as the law and administrative bodies) are to be assessed in view of the extent to which they realize the structure of will. This essentially means that the integrity and legitimacy of these social structures are understood as dependent on the degree to which they enable and allow individuals to pursue their choices and to make them cohere both with the choices of others and with shared normative practices. This again involves a complex network of social interaction and mutual recognition, as well as the individuals' orientation towards universally justified social practices.³⁸

It should be clear how this account offers a different response to the *all-or-nothing* choice. But it might be objected that the adequacy to Hegel's text that is thus achieved may be problematic in itself. Re-appropriating Hegel's conception of the will for, say, an account of political freedom, may come – even *volens volens* – with a commitment to other claims Hegel endorsed, such as the claim that the state as the reality of concrete freedom is ideally organized as a constitutional monarchy in which the monarch figures as *the* embodiment of the universal will. To decide this, one needs to be clear about whether Hegel's reference to the *Logic* in his

analysis of the will is to be retained as justificatory, or whether it can be treated as explanatory. Here the reconstruction I have offered takes the latter route and treats Hegel's references to the *Logic* as explanatory for the analyses and categorical distinctions in the *Philosophy of Right*. And I think that this does not imply a commitment to adopting all of Hegel's claims or his monolithic system in its entirety.³⁹

This strategy could be extended to a reconstruction of Hegel's account of political freedom, in which the will is used as a guiding principle for the definition of the (in some sense ideal) normative structure of the social, i.e., of social formations and their interrelations, and of social institutions. An account of this normative structure – here I agree with Honneth – has to refer centrally to the conditions of autonomous life in spheres of interaction and recognition.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have shown what is involved in dealing with Hegel's social philosophy concerning the topic of political freedom. I have outlined the way in which Honneth seeks to show the systematic relevance of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. As it turns out, it is certainly one question what a present-day account of political freedom requires, especially if it is to be in line with our intuitions about democratic participation or our shared experiences with the disadvantages of authoritarian political systems. The questions of what Hegel's philosophy really is, what an adequate interpretation of it is, and whether Hegel's model state is one that accords with our intuitions, have to be distinguished from the purely systematic question. But if any single one of Hegel's insights is relevant to present-day philosophical theorizing, then it should be taken and appropriated with as much of the *logical* foundation as possible. This may be taken as an invitation to see what can be learned from Hegel's articulation of normative principles grounded in the structure of the autonomous will and the basic structures of spheres of recognition without dismissing the key to his analyses altogether. That key, the structural determinations and conceptual analyses of the *Logic*, may also be what grounds those of Hegel's views we would now regard as outdated, strange or disconcerting.⁴⁰ But where we can constructively accommodate Hegel's analyses and make our own arguments profit from his insights, including the logico-metaphysical context in which he set them out, there we should not hesitate to do so. And, finally, maybe this would make for a social and political philosophy that could go beyond establishing procedural guidelines and thus live up to the highest expectations.⁴¹

Notes

1. By referring to the role of metaphysics in Hegel's philosophical system as 'foundational' I do not mean to suggest that the *Logic* and the *Realphilosophie*, as the young Hegel used to refer to what became the *Science of Logic* on the one hand and the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Spirit* on the other, stand in a relation of foundation and application. Rather, Hegel's metaphysics can be called 'foundational' in the sense that it provides a general account of basic conceptual structures that are invoked and elaborated in view of analyses of natural and social phenomena.
2. Honneth (1992).
3. See Hampton (1989) and Rawls (1985).
4. Honneth (2001). All translations of Honneth's text are mine; page references are to the German 2001 edition.
5. Siep (1992 and especially 2010) and Pippin (2008) provide further examples of engagement with Hegel's practical thought that seeks to be both critical and constructive.
6. For this embedment claim, see Horstmann (1997).
7. See Halbig (2002).
8. See Enc III, §487. The anachronism involved in referring to the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia* is not as problematic as it might seem. Of course, it was the first edition of the compendium (published in 1817) that was in the background of the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), but the quoted paragraph from the 1830 edition should count as Hegel's final word on the relation between the two works. In the following, I ignore the possibility of discontinuities between the first and later editions of the *Encyclopaedia*, assuming (perhaps controversially) that, should there be any, they do not affect the relation to the *Philosophy of Right* as outlined.
9. I assume that the *Science of Logic* can plausibly be read as a semantic analysis of fundamental metaphysical concepts *and*, because Hegel does not employ such dichotomies as those between thought and object or (linguistic) concept and object, as the exposition of a monistic idealist metaphysics. The *Logic* does include a theory of inference and reasoning, but it is not in anything like the more recent sense of the term a 'formal' logic. See Horstmann (1990) and Stern (2009).
10. On a distinction along similar lines in the English-speaking Hegel scholarship see also Brooks (2007), 5ff.
11. Honneth (2001), 11.
12. Ibid., 12.
13. Ibid., 13.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. See especially Ritter (2003).
18. Allusions and direct reference to the *Logic* can be found in PR §§2Z, 7Z, 24Z, 31, 33, 85, 88, 95, 141Z, 269, 272Z, 302Z and 304.
19. Hegel writes: 'The method whereby the concept, in science, develops out of itself and is merely an *immanent* progression and production of its own determinations is likewise assumed to be familiar from logic' (PR §31).

20. This formulation is meant to echo Croce (1915).
21. Cf. also Horstmann (1999).
22. Cf. Halbig (2002), Quante/Schweikard (2009), Siep (2010) and Quante (2011).
23. See especially Habermas (1990, 1994).
24. On my account, the problem is that this so-called post-metaphysical approach is not non-metaphysical; there is an independence claim involved here that is itself a metaphysical claim.
25. Honneth (2001), 15.
26. PR §4.
27. PR §5.
28. PR §6.
29. Note that the concept of 'communication' is almost, i.e., except for a hand-written note to PR §96, completely alien to Hegel's practical philosophy. Honneth opts for interpreting recognitive relationships and social exchanges aiming at recognition as manifestations of communicative practices. This makes for an updating but not necessarily distorting account of Hegel's view of social practices.
30. In the following account of Hegel's analysis of the structure of the will, I draw on Quante/Schweikard (2009).
31. PR §5.
32. PR §6.
33. PR §7.
34. PR §7Z.
35. This is precisely the internal inferential structure Hegel uses in his explication of the 'concept as such' in Enc I §163.
36. PR §6Z.
37. Of course, this move from concept-logical to metaphysical structure, from conceptual analysis in Hegel's sense to the expression of an ontological commitment, would need to be substantiated by a much more elaborate account of Hegel's project in the *Science of Logic*. See, for instance, Horstmann's reading of the *Logic* (in Horstmann 1990).
38. A more elaborate version of this reading of Hegel, see Quante/Schweikard (2009).
39. For a somewhat similar qualificatory argument, see Brandom (2005).
40. See Siep (2010), part I.
41. In preparing and revising this contribution, I have profited immensely from discussions with Ludwig Siep, Michael Quante and Amir Mohseni, and from very helpful suggestions by Lisa Herzog.

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Part III

Hegel's Thought in Great Britain

9

Hegel and British Idealism

W. J. Mander

Introduction

Over thirty years after his death in Germany, in a foreign land most famed philosophically for its common sense empiricism and distrust of anything abstract or metaphysical, there occurred one of the most striking and surprising outbreaks to date of Hegelianism. From around 1865 onwards a species of neo-Hegelian idealism rose up rapidly to become the dominant form of philosophy in Britain. This chapter offers an introductory consideration of that school¹ – most commonly referred to as ‘British Idealism’ – presenting, first, an outline of the basic history of the movement, second, an inventory of the several different kinds of material it gave rise to and, finally, some broader observations on the general character of this particular incarnation of ‘Hegelianism’.

At the outset a word of warning is due. The discussion ranges over some fifty or more years and some thirty or so different philosophers, and in consequence for every general claim made it will probably be possible to find (if you look hard enough) some counter example or other. But whereas British Idealism was never any sort of monolithic orthodoxy, it did manifest a characteristic family of views which both bound it together and distinguished it from its predecessors, rivals and successors, making the classification a useful one; even if, like all such groupings, there must always remain a few elements that resist capture in its net.

The historical development of British idealism

Prior to 1865, Hegel’s philosophical system was largely unknown in Britain. It was not completely unfamiliar, to be sure. A few pioneering

scholars such as Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893) and James Frederick Ferrier (1808–1864) had made efforts to acquaint themselves with his philosophy, while many of those who remained unacquainted had made, by contrast, a deliberate decision to *avoid* it – for Hegel’s reputation, tainted with the rumours of dangerous religious unorthodoxy, reached Britain some time before his works ever did. Nonetheless, in general it may be said that prior to 1865 British philosophy, absorbed in its own insular debates, was in the main ignorant of Hegel.

Then, pretty much all of a sudden, a number of young British philosophers turned their attention to Hegel and, influencing others to follow them, within a very short time spawned an entire philosophical movement. The initial trickle of idealist writings grew during the 1870s into an absolute flood of publications, as the neo-Hegelian ideas they were putting forward went from alien eccentricity to near complete dominance in around fifteen years. The School began its life in Oxford and Glasgow, but quickly spread to include the other ancient universities, and in due course the new civic ones as well.

At a point in time when on the continent Hegel’s reputation had sunk to a low ebb such a rapid and wholesale adoption of his ideas calls for explanation. A variety of factors may be cited. The nineteenth century saw a series of intellectual advances – such as ‘higher criticism’ of the Bible, increased knowledge of other cultures and religions, the rapid growth of materialistic science, and the advent of evolutionary theory – which together constituted a profound challenge to traditional senses of religion, self and morality. With native philosophical ideas unable to make any adequate response, philosophers turned to idealism as an alternative way of finding some sort of space for what seemed so threatened; rational defence of the place of moral and spiritual values. Hegelian idealism was attractive also for its socially based moral and political philosophy; a way of thinking whose attraction increased in proportion as the bitter social results of rapid industrialization and urbanization were blamed upon the individualistic liberalism that had been intellectually dominant throughout the century in which they had come into being. The rise of British Idealism must be linked also with the rise of philosophy as an autonomous academic discipline. As universities grew, the Idealists were able to present a unified conception of themselves as professional philosophers – the champions of a distinct subject with its own separate method and social utility – where previous philosophies as often as not had tended to wear the mantle of some other discipline; classics, natural science, psychology, theology, history and even literature.

The dominance of British Idealism lasted until about 1900, when more realist and empiricist forms of philosophy reasserted themselves, forcefully repudiating the Idealist hegemony. Although it involved other schools of thought too,² this revolt against Idealism is associated principally with the new style of philosophy developed in Cambridge by Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) and G.E. Moore (1873–1958); the movement which evolved into what we now know as analytic philosophy and which went on to dominate twentieth-century philosophy in the English language. The manner of Idealism's demise is significant, because Russell, Moore and the other early analytic philosophers first made their names precisely by criticizing Idealism, and it is they who gave to the school the reputation by which it is now known – or rather, we should say, by which it is *not* known, because it has never really recovered from the scorn they poured upon it. The British Idealist episode, when recalled at all, is nearly always represented in the colours they painted it; as an uncharacteristic and embarrassing rationalist hiccup in an otherwise unbroken native tradition of empiricism.

There is much that is wrong with that portrayal, and one point may be noted immediately. Histories of Philosophy, like fashion magazines, invariably move impatiently on to the next new system which, the reader is left to assume, usurped its predecessor. But one of the most interesting points about British Hegelianism is just how long after its official 'demise' it continued to flourish. Certainly it was a significant presence up to the 1930s, and arguably beyond. In his 1936 *Language, Truth and Logic* A. J. Ayer (1910–1989) memorably attacks F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), whose *Appearance and Reality* was published in 1893, some forty-three years earlier – such an attack could have had no relevance for Ayer's readers unless they felt that there were still at work around them modern representatives of the same errors.

Commencing with a rapid advance and ending in a long slow decline, the British Idealist episode lasted for around fifty years, and some scholars have isolated various 'generations' within its span. Such subdivisions have only limited value, but it should be noted that the movement continued long enough for there to come up through the discipline many philosophers who had been thoroughly educated in this tradition, and several of its chief figures were developing their own teachers' positions. T. H. Green (1836–1882) and Edward Caird (1835–1908) are especially significant in that regard inspiring many philosophers who may not unfairly be thought of as their disciples. The length of its reign should also warn not to expect greater constancy to its doctrines than is warranted, for we must not imagine that philosophy simply stood

still for so long a period. For example, there passed around sixty years between T. H. Green and R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943), and where the former's idealism is best understood as a direct attack on John Sturt Mill's empiricism, the latter's is more profitably seen as arising out of opposition to the Logical Positivists.³

Translations and commentaries

To put some more flesh onto this historical sketch, it is helpful to make an inventory of the sort of philosophical work that the British Idealist movement produced. This falls under three different types.

First of all, many translations, expositions and analyses of Hegel's own philosophy were produced. Whether through insular ignorance or active suspicion, Hegelian philosophy was kept at bay for a long time and to begin with, reliable translation or accurate commentary was in short supply. James Hutchison Stirling's (1820–1909) 1865 *The Secret of Hegel* set out to remedy that and was, in many ways, the book which set off the whole British Idealist movement. A curious amalgam of differing elements – personal confession of the author's struggle to make sense of his subject, notes towards a true understanding, direct translation, paraphrase, textual commentary, and consideration of rival interpretations – with a writing style so influenced by Carlyle as to be in places almost unreadable, it was perhaps an unlikely success. Indeed, it was joked at the time that if Stirling 'knew the secret of Hegel he had managed to keep it to himself'.⁴ But it was the first attempt to engage in any serious way with Hegel, and its focus set the tone for what was to follow: first, it presented Hegel as a champion of the thorough-going identity of thought and reality, the coincidence of logic and metaphysics, and secondly it characterized him as a religious apologist, defending faith in general and Christianity in particular, against the ever-strengthening critiques of materialistic science and critical history that nineteenth-century believers felt gathering all around them.

Two more early works should be noted. William Wallace's (1843–1897) 1874 translation of Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*, under the title *The Logic of Hegel*, presented non-German readers with Hegel's own words and was immensely influential; it is still in print today. As Wallace saw it, for Hegel the task of logic – 'the fundamental problem of philosophy' – was to demonstrate the identity (in difference) of subject and object,⁵ to discover the underlying 'primeval unity' which manifests itself in the duality of mind and nature;⁶ for it was in this insight that Hegel had 'solved the problem of Metaphysics', he argued, 'by turning it into

Logic',⁷ that is, by demonstrating that the key to reality is to be found in reason.

In Edward Caird's (1835–1908) short introduction to Hegel of 1883, Hegel emerges as the great champion of religion. For religion, Caird understands as the search beyond our divided and fragmentary existence for a higher unity,⁸ and what Hegel called the Absolute Idea, 'the absolute principle to which, as their unity, we must refer all things and beings', is to Caird nothing less than God.⁹ But more specifically, he believes that Hegel's philosophy is Christian, indeed, the discovery and expression of 'the essential meaning of Christianity'.¹⁰ Hegel's doctrine of coming to self-consciousness through self-diremption into the other, of affirmation through negation, of reconciliation through opposition is, argues Caird, the very same as the essential Christian message, 'Die to live'.

By this point the floodgates were open, as all of Hegel's works began to be translated and a stream of critical and expository writings – both books and articles – to appear. Special mention should be made here of J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925) and James Black Baillie (1872–1940), perhaps the chief workers in this cause, who between them produced a veritable library of detailed Hegel commentary.

One final point that should be noted is, while the bulk of this commentary and analysis is generally supportive, the British Idealists were quite prepared on occasion and over serious points simply to *disagree* with Hegel. The following illustration will suffice. The famous Hegelian dictum that the real is the rational was pretty much taken to mean by figures like Edward Caird, Bernard Bosanquet, (1848–1923) and R. B. Haldane (1856–1928) that there is no difference between perfected thought and reality itself. A lovely example of this is Henry Jones (1852–1922) who understands it to imply there is no such subject as epistemology.¹¹ The whole notion of epistemology as a subject is misguided and alien to idealism, he thinks, for epistemology treats of the relation between thought and reality, between ideas and things, but true idealists do not recognize the existence of any such 'world of ideas' requiring relation to a sphere of 'things'; reality and knowledge are of a piece. This sort of view is often called 'panlogicism' and analytically inclined critics like Russell attacked it mercilessly. But the point to stress is that not a few Idealists too thought this was quite mistaken. J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925), F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) and A. S. Pringle-Pattison (1856–1931) all in their own ways disagree seriously with such thinking. While maintaining that Reality was not anything other than *experience*, they would nonetheless insist that it was other than just *thought*. As F. H. Bradley famously put it,

It may come from a failure in my metaphysics, or from a weakness of the flesh which continues to blind me, but the notion that existence could be the same as understanding strikes as cold and ghost-like as the dreariest materialism. That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious, if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories. Though dragged to such conclusions, we can not embrace them [...] They no more make that Whole which commands our devotion, than some shredded dissection of human tatters is that warm and breathing beauty of flesh which our hearts found delightful.¹²

Re-workings of Hegelian philosophy

A second species of writings which British Idealism produced are what might be described as relatively straightforward re-workings of Hegelian philosophy. A lot of the new Idealists took Hegel's ideas and essentially re-packaged or re-presented them for a fresh readership. The resulting productions are independent works, not mere summaries or analyses of Hegel texts, but in the main they follow Hegel's footsteps closely.

A very good example of this is John Caird's (1820–1898) first book, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880). This is in effect a re-presentation in English of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Caird offers a defence of reason in religion, by arguing for a species of pantheistic metaphysics and regarding religious dogma as a sort of lower pictorial presentation of the Absolute. His brother Edward's first set of Gifford lectures, *The Evolution of Religion* (1893), play a similar role. In setting out the path from objective religion, through subjective religion, to Absolute religion they spell out in detail Hegel's own three-step development in the history of religion as it appears in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Moving away from religion, the Hegelian notion of social and political history as the story of the evolution of freedom that we find in his *Philosophy of Right* was one that was repackaged several times, for example by both Edward Caird and by Henry Jones.¹³ Turning to aesthetics, Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic* (1892), the first-ever history of aesthetics in English, while it contains much material of its own, in its overall narrative follows the outline plan of the evolution of aesthetic understanding (from the abstract to the concrete) to be found in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*. The emphasis on history in the all

preceding works will not have gone unnoticed, and it was characteristic of the Idealists to spend attention on the history of their own subject also, writing extensively about Kant, Spinoza, British empiricism, Plato and Aristotle. Here too we find another example of their Hegelianism, for often the history of philosophy which they present runs very close to that found in Hegel's own *Lectures on History of Philosophy*.

One of the most crucial components of British Idealist thinking in moral and political contexts is what we might call the social conception of the individual. *Contra* the individualistic understanding of human nature, associated with figures like Mill or Herbert Spencer, they maintain that society is not composed of discrete human units, simply added together like so many atoms. Rather the individual must be thought of as an abstraction from society; something which makes no sense, which is not even real, outside its context. All of the Idealists believed something like this, but it is a view most closely associated with Bradley in the chapter of his *Ethical Studies* called 'My station and its duties'. And he himself openly acknowledges there that this position is a reworking of Hegel's notion of *Sittlichkeit* or 'ethical life'.¹⁴ The human being is a social creature and its moral goal therefore is also social.

Original systems and approaches

If the two species of writing outlined so far were all that the British Idealists produced one might be forgiven for thinking the movement a rather dull affair, but third and most interesting of all it should be noted that they put forward various original doctrines of their own. The starting point for these might well have been Hegel, but the resulting products took on a life of its own, and in some cases this originality extended to the construction of entire philosophical systems. There is no space in a chapter of this compass to go into details, but thumbnail outlines may be given of the three chief examples.

T. H. Green, in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, argues that knowledge of nature cannot itself be explained in natural terms. For to know something as real is to know it as related, but relations are 'work of the mind'. Our experience of sequence cannot be accounted for as a sequence of experiences. But if reality depends on knowing, it clearly does not depend on yours or my knowing. So Green posits what he calls 'the eternal consciousness' within which reality as a whole is grounded and which progressively manifests itself in advancing human knowledge. F.H. Bradley, in his *Appearance and Reality*, reaches a similar position from the opposite position. To him relations, rather

than the mark of reality, are its condemnation. We can make no sense of them, so reality must be judged above relations, a monistic unity. It is not however a homogeneous blur, for what we cannot *think* we can nevertheless *feel*, and Bradley's Absolute is a supra-rational unity of *feeling*. The Monism of figures like Green and Bradley worried other Idealists, such as, for example, Pringle-Pattison, who put forward a variant system called Personal Idealism, holding individual selves 'impervious', that is, incapable of overlap either with each other or with any overarching God or Absolute. Most of these systems were theistic, but perhaps the most famous of them all was an atheistic one, that advanced by J.M.E. McTaggart, in his work *The Nature of Existence*. Known today only for his notorious paradoxical proof of the unreality of time, McTaggart's positive philosophy involves a community of timeless spirits bound together in a system of interlocking perceptions of each other, which if they appear to us as an experience of material reality are in reality timeless perceptions of mutual love.

Some of Idealism's more original advances on Hegel were less a question of *systems* than of *concepts* which, while again they may have originated in Hegel, were developed by the school in original directions of their own. Three examples suffice. First of all, while present in Hegel, the notion of the 'concrete universal' gets pushed to the fore in British Idealism.¹⁵ It plays various roles, but the basic idea is that in contradistinction to an 'abstract universal' which finds the lowest common denominator – what is the same in all – a 'concrete universal' exists precisely through its diversity. At one extreme its advocates favoured such examples as the individual nation, social institution or human person, each of which has being only through its variety, but its range of application was broad and the concept is perhaps best illustrated by a much more lowly example – colour. There is no common essence between blue, green and red, yet all are colours.

A second distinctively Idealist contribution was their advocacy of 'relative identity' or 'identity-in-difference', and a corresponding opposition to what they term 'abstract identity'. This may be regarded as a combination of two different thoughts: that *nothing is absolutely isolated* and that *all opposition implies unity*. To take the first, it is tempting to suppose (with Bishop Butler) that everything is what it is and that's all there is to it. But the British Idealists disagree; what a thing is cannot be properly understood except in terms of what it is not. 'Isolate a thing from all its relations, and try to assert it by itself; at once you find that you have negated it, as well as its relations. The thing in itself is nothing', says Caird.¹⁶ But (moving to the second thought) neither can we say

that in order to understand the world all we need to grasp are the sum of its various contrasts and distinctions. For the Idealists went on to deny that difference is even possible except against a backdrop of identity or union. There can be no sense in thinking things different from one another unless they can be brought together and compared. Things cannot, to take a very simple example, be spatially separate unless they share a common space. The result: paradoxically everything is both identical to and different from everything else. A great deal of idealistic logic and metaphysics consists in the thinking through the implications of this thought.

The Idealists were holistic thinkers. Everything is *what* it is because of *where* it is; it points to the larger whole, from which it is the last resort but an abstraction. This leads us to a third characteristic notion of theirs, that of an 'internal relation'. Relation and surrounding context so enter into the nature of a thing, that to alter them is to change it. Perceptions affords many such examples – how colour looks depends on adjacent colours, how food tastes depends on what it is combined with, how scary we find a movie depends on the accompanying soundtrack – but for the idealists this thesis concerns not just appearances but reality itself. Everything carries within its very essence relations to everything else.

Conclusion: the character of British idealism

Having noted a number of specific figures, works and concepts, we can attain a further grasp of what British Idealism was all about if we move to a more general perspective and detail some of the chief characteristics of their style of philosophy.

The movement has been characterized as 'Hegelian' but it is vital to realize that their thought was mediated though other influences too; Kant, Spinoza, Plato and Aristotle in particular, but even the thought of their opponents such as the British Empiricist (Locke, Berkeley, Hume). Of course, their readings of these prior philosophers themselves were mediated through Hegel, but the vital point is to see that there were *other* sources, too. In this sense, the tag 'Hegelian' is perhaps unfortunate. Many observers at the time regarded the movement as *Kantian* rather than Hegelian, while many of the Idealists themselves professed to be doing no more than setting out what was implicit in Plato and Aristotle.

The dominating theme of the British Idealist approach to philosophy was undoubtedly *metaphysics*. Whatever the more specific topic, from

ethics to logic to religion to aesthetics, we quickly find ourselves in the domain of metaphysics. Perhaps this stems in part from the fact that they turned to Hegel as a battering ram to use against the prevailing metaphysics of naturalism and individualism (as found for example in Mill's), but certainly it takes us a long way from the way in which Hegel is typically read today. Recent work on Hegel's epistemology may be set against Jones's claim that the essence of Hegelianism lies in the fact that it leaves no room for such a subject.¹⁷ The distrust of metaphysics that has dominated twentieth-century analytic philosophy was a resultant, but extreme, reaction against what went before and, moreover, one which has at the same time prevented any proper assessment to date of the Idealist's real contribution to the history of philosophy.

The other striking feature of, not only the British Idealist Hegel, but also their own independent work is its *religiosity*. Sometimes orthodox, sometimes heterodox, sometimes much attenuated, their writing is never without a spiritual dimension. It shows itself in a metaphysics where value and teleology are accorded the highest reality, and in an ethics where social service becomes a religious obligation; where moral progress is literally the progressive manifestation of the divine. In this matter also Idealist thought has to contemporary readers become unfashionable and uncomfortable.

A final key element in British Idealist thought that must be mentioned is its emphasis on the *social*. They all subscribe to a social conception of the individual and his or her moral goal, which leads to a critique of individual 'natural' rights and an elevated conception of both society and the state which ideally represents it. Not surprisingly this has attracted much negative criticism, suggesting that it is a authoritarian and anti-liberal philosophy. However, most of this opposition has been unfair. We need to see that in all of the Idealists there occurs also a parallel emphasis on individuality and freedom. Nothing the state does should ever undermine self-reliance. Its only role, argues Bosanquet, is the 'hindrance of hindrances'.¹⁸

Notes

1. For an in-depth account see Mander (2011).
2. Note should be taken here of so called 'Oxford realism' and also of a British version of pragmatism, associated chiefly with F. C. S. Schiller.
3. For more detailed discussion of Collingwood's philosophy see Browning (this volume).
4. Muirhead (1931), 171.
5. Wallace (1874), 148.

6. Wallace (1874), 209.
7. Wallace (1874), 297.
8. Caird (1889) vol. II, 68.
9. Caird (1883), 218.
10. Caird (1883), 218.
11. Jones (1893).
12. Bradley (1883), 590–591.
13. Caird (1866) and Jones (1909).
14. Bradley (1876), 172–173, 185–187.
15. For more detail see Stern (2007).
16. Caird (1883), 162.
17. On the reception (or rather, non-reception) of Hegel's epistemology see also Westphal (this volume).
18. Bosanquet (1899), 177–187.

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10

Rethinking Collingwood's Hegel

Gary Browning

Introduction

This chapter reviews how R. G. Collingwood, a noted British Idealist philosopher, interpreted Hegel. Collingwood (1889–1943) was a prolific and innovative thinker, who worked in a number of fields. He was a distinguished historian of Roman Britain, a practising archaeologist and a philosopher with interests in the history of philosophy and in epistemology, metaphysics, cosmology, ethics, aesthetics and politics. He is perhaps best known for *The Idea of History*, a retrospectively produced volume, which contains an account of the development of history as a form of knowledge and essays on the nature of historical understanding. Collingwood's theory of history takes an historian to evoke the past by rethinking the thoughts of past actors from the evidence that can be assembled in the present. Collingwood's particular interest in the philosophy of history and his sense of the interdependence of philosophy and history signal his affinity with Hegel. Collingwood expressly valued Hegel's historical conception of reality and in *The Idea of History*, he recognizes his debt to Hegel while also criticizing the sweep of Hegel's teleological understanding of history.

Collingwood is an engaging philosopher precisely because he follows Hegel's lead in recognizing the affinity between philosophy and history in that his views on metaphysics, art, ethics and politics are informed by a sense that these fields of study are historical, and that it would be a grave mistake to assimilate them to a standard acontextual set of questions and answers. To say that Collingwood is influenced by Hegel, however, begs questions about the nature of the influence. Matters are complicated because Collingwood does not advertise consistently the links between his own thinking and Hegel's philosophy. The complexity is heightened

by the trenchant critique of Hegel that Collingwood offers in his late work, *The New Leviathan* (1942). How does Collingwood conceive of Hegel? Is he a major influence, a passing interest or an ambivalent figure in Collingwood's imagination? The positive and profound influence that Hegel exerted upon Collingwood is most evident in Collingwood's writings that were unpublished in his lifetime. Throughout his career when Collingwood developed ideas in unpublished writings, he invariably drew upon Hegel's thought as an inspiration for and a measure of what he was doing. In writings that he prepared for publication Hegel is sometimes praised, but often ignored or critiqued. The questions that arise from the different ways in which Collingwood relates to Hegel are to be resolved by recognizing how the influence of one thinker on another, and the use that one thinker makes of another, are complex issues, insusceptible of unambiguous answers. In his unpublished writings, Collingwood reveals the deep influence that Hegel exerts on his thinking, whereas in published works Collingwood is concerned not simply to convey his thinking and influences but also to reach and persuade audiences who were not sympathetic to Hegel. In what follows, the nature of interpretation and influence is examined via a critical engagement with Collingwood's own conception of influence, before Collingwood's uneven engagement with Hegel in his unpublished and published writings is reviewed.¹ The reasons for these different accounts are then explored and some conclusions on the notion of philosophical influence are drawn, which go beyond Collingwood's notions of influence, but can be demonstrated by analysing his own way of being influenced by Hegel.

Interpretation and influence

What is the significance of the act of interpretation by which a philosopher is interpreted? Does interpretation enable or dissemble the truth to which it is directed? If a thinker's thought is merely assimilated to what the act of interpretation adduces, then that act operates with a questionable assumption that there is no remainder between a thought and its understanding. The problems that are posed in the justification of acts of interpretation, however, can threaten to undermine the process of interpretation itself, as answers to them will demand further answers, and the chain of questions frustrates endlessly the quest for resolution. Given the intractability of such questions, many interpretive interrogations of philosophers routinely sideline them. Interpretations of Hegel abound, and yet distinctive answers to the problems posed by their acts

of interpretation are rare.² Collingwood, however, is linked to Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) and Hegel himself in aligning his interpretation of Hegel to a reading of intellectual history that explains both how interpretation is possible and how interpretations of past philosophies bear upon subsequent philosophies.³

In his *An Autobiography* (1939) Collingwood recalls how his approach to philosophy was distinctive because of his attention to issues associated with questions of interpretation. He reacted against the assumptions of the contemporary school of realists, who presumed that the act of knowing makes no difference to what is known.⁴ For Collingwood, knowing makes a difference to what is known, and hence acts of interpretation require attention. The world does not consist in a world of facts that can be articulated in a definitive set of propositions, for facts have to be constructed and propositions are answers to questions. Without questions, there are no answers and hence no propositions. The world of facts is a world that is evoked by thoughts. Past theories and philosophies do not exist outside of contextual frames of reference, which are to be understood via their interpretation. This involves imagining them as answers to questions.

Collingwood's reflexive interest in questions of interpretation underlies his interest in historical understanding and interpretation. The past, for Collingwood, is not to be assimilated to the present. Rather, understanding the past requires a particular form of imaginative concentration so that the historian evokes the past by using evidence to infer the circumstances and thoughts of past actors, who held differing assumptions and goals from those of their successors. In his *An Autobiography*, Collingwood recognizes how past political philosophies focus upon specific and differing forms of political association. Plato and Hobbes, for instance, differ profoundly, for they reflect upon differing forms of political association, the city state and the modern state respectively. They are united not by the sameness of the style and object of their theorizing but by their roles in framing different answers to different questions in the ongoing development of philosophizing about changing political forms.⁵ Collingwood's reading of the historicity of political philosophy is a token of his debt to Hegel, who, like Collingwood, attended to the interpretation of past philosophies. Hegel imagined that philosophy is an enterprise in which successive philosophies, arising in particular historical political cultures, are constructed upon the remains of preceding ones.⁶

Collingwood's conception of influence emerges out of his philosophy of history and reflects his debt to Hegel and Hegel's notion of the

developmental nature of philosophy. In *The Idea of History* (published posthumously in 1946) Collingwood expressly praises Hegel's notion of influence and disparages the language of influence when it is misconceived as a process whereby the thought of one thinker is merely decanted into that of another.⁷ Collingwood echoes this dismissal of an erroneous resort to the notion of influence in *The Idea of Nature* (published posthumously in 1945) in referring to 'that frivolous and superficial type of history which speaks of "influences" and "borrowings" and so forth, and when it says that A is influenced by B or that A borrows from B never asks itself what there was in A that laid it open to B's influence, or what there was in A which made it capable of borrowing from B'.⁸ Contrary to this misuse of the notion of influence, Collingwood affirms an appropriate use of influence, in which a thinker is viewed as connecting their problems with the concerns of a preceding thinker.⁹ In *The Idea of History* Collingwood remarks, 'An intelligent inquiry into the influence of Socrates on Plato or Descartes on Newton, seeks to discover not the points of agreement, but the way in which the conclusions of one thinker give rise to problems for the next'.¹⁰ In *The Idea of Nature*, he develops his notion of authentic influence by observing how Hegel invoked Platonic ideas in responding to post-Kantian developments in philosophy in his own time. Collingwood follows Hegel in recognizing the historical specificity of thinkers and how successive thinkers may use inherited ideas in new ways that are demanded by new contexts.¹¹ For Collingwood, historical understanding is possible because historical ideas and actions contain thoughts, and thought is susceptible to being rethought in new contexts. This notion of rethinking informs Collingwood's conception of influence in the history of ideas, for preceding thoughts or sets of ideas, which have been developed by a preceding thinker, can be rethought and improved upon by a subsequent thinker. In the essay 'Progress as Created by Historical Thinking', in *The Idea of History*, Collingwood maintains, 'Philosophy progresses in so far as one stage of its development solves the problems which defeated it in the last, without losing its hold on the solutions already achieved'.¹² This language of progress guards against assuming that ideas are merely replicated in a new context, for the preceding thought can be revived but then criticized and used as an inspirational device to create new and improved schemes of thought. Therefore in *The New Leviathan*, Collingwood sees himself as advancing beyond Hobbes's preceding *Leviathan*, while building upon its insights.

Collingwood's notion of influence is relevant to his understanding and use of Hegel. He invokes Hegel to enable him to examine questions and

issues in a variety of ways, and yet he is not uncritical of Hegel and recognizes that in rethinking Hegel he is not merely replicating his thought. On the other hand, Collingwood's notion of influence does not allow for the possibility that the ideas of a philosopher might be inherently ambiguous and expressive of multiple meanings so that they are not be susceptible of being rethought in an unambiguous way. In the following section, Collingwood's use of Hegel in writings unpublished in his lifetime is examined and the pivotal role that Hegel plays in Collingwood's thinking on logic, ethics, nature and politics is explained. Subsequently, works of Collingwood published in his lifetime are shown to reveal a more complex relationship to Hegel, in that at times he is ignored as well as being referred to negatively and positively. The disjunction between the unpublished and published writings is explained by noting how Collingwood attempts to persuade his audience in his published work and insofar as he imagined that readership either to be ignorant of Hegel or hostile to him, then his use of Hegel becomes cautious and tactical. Overall, Collingwood's Hegel becomes complicated in ways that are not registered in his own conception of influence.

Collingwood's Hegel: the unpublished writings

Collingwood's early unpublished writings on logic reveal the influence of Hegel. Collingwood makes use of Hegel's ideas on the dialectical interplay of concepts in order to counter contemporary styles of philosophy in which such interplay is denied. In these writings, Collingwood develops a critique of contemporary forms of philosophical realism and propositional logic in denying that truth may be insulated either from the process of coming to know it or from the errors against which it defines itself.¹³ Collingwood draws on Hegel's philosophy to develop powerful arguments countering what he took to be mistaken assumptions in contemporary logic. The core of his early alternative logic, discernible in the surviving unpublished manuscript of *Truth and Contradiction* (1917) rests on its critique of the law of identity. Collingwood remarks, 'The law of identity becomes true when it is interpreted as the law of identity as difference, of difference as identity'.¹⁴ Just as Hegel argues that identity implies the identity of identity and non-identity, so Collingwood in *Truth and Contradiction* takes identity to imply rather than exclude difference.¹⁵ For instance, Collingwood remarks, 'Truth and falsehood are attributes not of single separated judgements but of systems of thought, systems in which every judgement is coloured by every other'.¹⁶ Collingwood deplores the concentration of contemporary philosophers upon isolated

propositions and instead urges that all ideas involve relations to other ideas, and understands the inter-penetration of judgements to entail that the rejection of an idea by a thinker will leave its mark upon the remaining apparently independent ideas of that thinker.¹⁷ Likewise, he argues that historical facts are not isolated from one another and related circumstances. Indeed, the relevance of an historical fact depends upon its context. He observes, 'If a person were absolutely ignorant of English history and wishing to instruct him you began by saying "William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings", the statement would be mere noise to him until you had sketched the general situation of the time and the significance of the battle'.¹⁸

By insisting upon a relational view of reality, Collingwood self-consciously observes the provenance of his ideas in Hegel. In *Truth and Contradiction* he states, 'Just as Hegel's criticism of the law of identity from which he started sprang from a recognition of the mutual dependence of identity and difference – of the fact of that identity and difference- of the difference in identity – so our treatment of the laws of contradiction and excluded middle seems to imply a similar connexion between truth and error'.¹⁹ In *Sketch for a logic of Becoming* (1920) Collingwood urges that thought is relational and developmental, observing that 'The act of thought is the judgement and the judgement is an act, an identity of concrete differences'.²⁰ In identifying the relational nature of concepts, he invokes Hegel expressly, noting, 'Here is Hegel's doctrine of categories (concrete concepts) as in themselves capable of truth; for such concepts are themselves systems of judgments'.²¹ In *Libellus de Generatione* (1920) Collingwood underlines the importance of the freedom of human beings in developing modes of thought and action. This recognition of freedom underpins his interest in history, for he observes how philosophy must thereby be connected with history. He notes, 'For the world of becoming [...] history is philosophy and philosophy is history, not as an undifferentiated identity'.²² Again in *Libellus de Generatione* he recognizes a debt to Hegel. He observes, 'I am operating with a new concept of subjectivity, a concept due in the main to Kant and Hegel'.²³

Throughout his early and still unpublished writings on logic, however, Collingwood is not an uncritical disciple of Hegel. While acknowledging Hegel's influence upon his own thinking, he cautions against Hegel's absolutism and suggests that Hegel's absolutism is not conversant with the openness of experience. In *Prolegomena to Logic* (1920), he suggests, '... because Hegel did not shake himself free from his Spinozistic and Schellingian training he tended to fall back, whenever he was not in his happiest mood into just this (monistic) view of

the concept and his followers have erected the whole into a kind of fetish'.²⁴ Hence although Collingwood sees the merit of Hegel's holistic and relational conception of reality, he is also wary of his tendency to systematize and corral experience into a unified system. In *Notes on Hegel's Logic* (1920), he recognizes how Hegel has a tendency to separate philosophical from pre-philosophical experience so that the former transcends and thus diminishes the latter.²⁵ Collingwood's critical reading of Hegel is of course compatible with his appreciation of Hegel, even extending to his recognition that Hegel aimed to achieve an absolutism in which all cows were not black.²⁶ Collingwood's criticisms of Hegel are also at one with his understanding of the operation of historical influence, for Collingwood's Hegelianism allows for a nuanced conception of identity and difference, which accommodates a thinker's disagreement with a preceding thinker while still acknowledging their influence. Collingwood maintained that rethinking the thought of a preceding thinker allowed for its supersession given the subsequent context in which the rethinking takes place.

Collingwood's reliance upon Hegel is also evident in a number of other writings that remained unpublished during his life. For instance, Collingwood's writings on cosmology show the clear and positive influence of Hegel. In *The Idea of Nature*, which was published after Collingwood's death in 1945, Knox edited and published Collingwood's lectures on the history of cosmology, which included a positive estimation of Hegel's contribution to the subject. Collingwood's own first order cosmology, which he developed in 1933–1934 and which remains largely unpublished, reflects the substantial influence of Hegel. Notably in *Notes Towards a Metaphysic*, Collingwood develops a first order cosmology in which he draws upon Hegel's philosophy of nature to provide a logical account of how nature is to be understood as a progressive series of forms of order, in which the relations between elements becomes increasingly rational and self-aware.²⁷ He recognizes the Hegelian provenance of his own thinking in observing, 'Hegel thought that all genuine concepts fell into a single unilinear order. I do not know if he was right but I suppose it is probable. What I want to suggest is that history is the coincidence of logical with temporal order'.²⁸ Likewise, in sections of the *Idea of History* that were unpublished in his lifetime and in *Principles of History*, which has only been published posthumously in 1999, Collingwood highlights his debt to Hegel as a philosopher of history, praising him for recognizing how mind, unlike nature, is known via its history.²⁹

In his still unpublished *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* (1932), Collingwood identifies how Kant and Hegel have transformed the

nature of moral thinking by highlighting the subjectivity of mankind, that is, the creative, free aspect of human thought and action.³⁰ It is this freedom of mind and action that informs his published moral and political philosophy in *The New Leviathan*. In an unpublished report on Foster's *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* for Oxford University Press in 1933, Collingwood makes clear his admiration for Hegel's systematic investigation of the centrality of freedom for political philosophy, and he is critical of Foster's underestimation of Hegel's respect for freedom.³¹

Collingwood's Hegel: the published writings

Collingwood's respect for Hegel informs writings that were published in his lifetime, even if his admiration for Hegel is expressed more circumspectly and less copiously than in the unpublished writings. At the outset of *Speculum Mentis* (1924), for instance, he maintains that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* provides the model for his own account of the diverse forms of mind's activities.³² In *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, he alludes to Hegel's philosophical practice representing a model for his own dialectical method. In writings that he prepared for publication, however, Collingwood is sparing in his references to Hegel. Particularly in his late published writings, Collingwood tends either to ignore Hegel in developing his philosophical ideas or to criticize him severely. In *The Principles of Art* (1938), Collingwood unfolds his ideas via a progressive development of notions of sense, imagination and reflection that are maintained by British empiricism, and he barely mentions continental theorists such as Kant, Hegel and the Italian idealists.³³ Again, in his late *An Essay on Metaphysics*, Collingwood reformulates the claims of metaphysics in historical terms, and in so doing he has been taken by some commentators to abandon the project of constructing a first order metaphysics.³⁴ In developing this historical account of metaphysics, Collingwood does not draw upon Hegel, and in denying the meaningfulness of the bare category of being he might be construed as turning his back on Hegel's logical investigation of general categories. In *An Autobiography*, Collingwood barely references Hegel, emphasizing how out of favour idealism was in interwar Oxford, and denying that he himself was an idealist.

Perhaps most disconcertingly, in *The New Leviathan* Collingwood develops an account of mind, politics and civilization in which Hegel is disparaged and identified as a theorist who obstructs liberal civilization. Hegel is lambasted for forcing his ideas upon events, that is,

for attempting to apply dialectical logic to the world of things and to propose a unified view of the necessary development of history. In *The New Leviathan*, Hegel, along with other German theorists such as Kant and Marx, is crudely represented as contributing to the decline of the classical politics of the rule of law that allows for civilized social interaction, and which the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, is taken to have supported. Collingwood maintains, 'The Germans who insisted with Hegel on the objective character of the social and political 'spirit', or with Marx on the indifference of the economic order to the consciousness of those involved in it, were offering their disciples what professed to be a criticism of the classical politics but was in fact only a statement of their inability to understand it'.³⁵

Collingwood's disparagement of Hegel in *The New Leviathan* is puzzling on a number of counts. For one thing, it contradicts his positive estimate of Hegel's moral and political standpoint in his unpublished writings on moral philosophy and on Foster's *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel*. Second, there are profound affinities between the arguments of *The New Leviathan* and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Collingwood and Hegel share a commitment to a systematic analysis of the conditions of a free form of political association, which incorporates a review of the nature of mind, social practices, political institutions and wider developments in civilization such as the arts and sciences.

Both works see the individual and society as being intertwined and recognize the role of a political association in overseeing social arrangements that allow the individual to express their freedom in concert with others. They are at one in seeing the family and associations of civil society as playing crucial roles in preparing individuals for the demands of citizenship. They envisage the forms of rational and free political association that they articulate to develop over time so that philosophy is not to conjure up forms of political association via mere speculation but is to rely on making sense of what has been developed in history.³⁶ It is true that Collingwood emphasizes the contingency of historical developments whereas Hegel envisages a kind of necessity at work, but it is insufficient to explain the vehemence with which Collingwood denounces Hegel in *The New Leviathan*.

Why Collingwood's Hegel differs in published vs. unpublished writings

The disparity between Collingwood's treatment of Hegel in his unpublished writings and in his published work requires explanation. Whereas

in his unpublished writings, Collingwood tends to develop his thinking in the light of his reading of Hegel, he tends to ignore Hegel in later published writings, and in the case of *The New Leviathan* disparages him as an enemy of liberalism and civilization. The disparity cannot be explained by assuming that Collingwood changed his mind on Hegel, for the later published works such as *The Principles of Art* (1938) and *The New Leviathan* are closely connected to Hegel's aesthetics and political philosophy respectively. And there is evidence that Collingwood was continuously aware of the affinities between Hegel and his own standpoint in these areas. His brief but telling footnote in *The Principles of Art* praising the successors of Kant is telling. Collingwood's aesthetics are developed out of Hegel and continental idealism but he recognizes that his English philosophical audience would respond to arguments more positively if they were constructed via analysis of English empiricists. Likewise, his positive endorsement of Hegel's political philosophy in a report in the 1930s for Oxford University Press, previously mentioned, indicates his awareness of the relevance of Hegel's political philosophy for his own notion of politics. The explanation of the discrepancy between Collingwood's estimate of Hegel in published and unpublished work resides in the mixture of concerns shaping Collingwood's attitudes in publishing his opinions. He was aware of strategic considerations in ensuring that his standpoint was viewed sympathetically and taken up by his readers.

Collingwood was aware of the unfashionability of Hegel in Oxford philosophy after the First World War and the later distaste for elaborate metaphysics that was developed under the auspices of logical positivism to which the influential figures such as A. J. Ayer (1910–1989) and Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976) were committed. This recognition of the unfashionability of Hegel contributes to his public reluctance to frame his ideas via Hegelian language and influence. In writing about politics, Collingwood also wanted to strike a patriotic note in *The New Leviathan*, which militated against acknowledging the positive influence of Hegel. A German thinker such as Hegel is to be denigrated rather than applauded if the point is to make readers accept their English duty to fight for their civilization. At the very least, there seem to be some conflictual elements in Collingwood's thinking about Hegel. On the one hand he, is acknowledged to be an acute thinker and a significant intellectual influence, but, on the other hand, he is recognized to be a thinker who is unpopular with and inappropriate for Collingwood's target audiences.

In his later published works, Collingwood continues to develop Hegelian themes, but at the same time he disguises the provenance of

his ideas and articulates his arguments overtly in non-speculative, non-Hegelian ways. He is prepared to disparage Hegel when this serves the purpose of drumming up a national pride in the spirit of English liberalism at a time of war.³⁷ There is no unambiguous Collingwood, and his invocation of Hegel defies the univocal interpretation that is favoured by his own notion of historical influence. The assumption that is entertained in his theory of history and in the related theory of influence is that ideas are clear-cut and can be rethought and taken up without ambiguity. However, Collingwood is simultaneously indebted to Hegel's concepts and style of reasoning while anxious to play down his influence publicly so as to maximize the impact of his own ideas on a non-Hegelian audience.

Conclusion

What can be termed the unresolved conflict in Collingwood's reading and use of Hegel reflects back uneasily on the notions of interpretation and influence that both Collingwood and Hegel maintained. Collingwood imagines that a thinker in the present, by scrutinizing the evidence, can recapture the thoughts of past thinkers, and he also maintains that a thinker in the present can supersede these past ideas by reflecting upon them in the light of subsequent developments. Unlike Gadamer, he distinguishes between these two aspects of intellectual historical engagement. There is no fusion of horizons between past and present as Gadamer maintains,³⁸ but rather a two-stage process whereby the past is ascertained and then superseded.

The problem with this conception of intellectual history is that it assumes that past ideas and present engagements with them are susceptible of clear-cut unambiguous analysis. Collingwood himself is a thinker whose thought is ambiguous. His attitude to Hegel is complex. On the one hand, he sees Hegel as an important predecessor, whose thought maps the dialectical interrelations of thought and reality and the historicity of the human world. On the other hand, he is cautious about using Hegel as an influence and plays down or deprecates him so as to appeal to an audience that is unsympathetic to Hegel and Hegelian language. It is unclear whether Collingwood himself is altogether aware of the consequent tensions underlying his expression of his ideas. There is a tension between Collingwood's ideas, his strategic concerns in presenting them, and his own balancing of strategic and intellectual considerations. His own presumption of historical knowledge, that there is a single train of thought to be rethought historically, is questionable.

Derrida's deconstructive reading of texts challenges this reading of the history of ideas, whereby ideas are held to be liable to reconstruction so as to capture the author's intended meaning.³⁹ Derrida is sceptical of an author's capacity to determine the meaning of texts; the ideas that they express are not to be interpreted as conforming to the intended meanings attributed to authors. For Derrida there is no outside of language to which it can be anchored so that its express and univocal meaning can be determined. Language is not a transparent medium whereby ideas are communicated directly and unambiguously. While the languages of intentions and representation perform roles, they do not limit how texts or sets of ideas are to be interpreted.⁴⁰ The overdetermination of ideas by the interrelations that are constituted by forms of textual expression and interpretation justifies Derrida's deconstructive techniques, whereby a hermeneutics of suspicion replaces a reliance on a presumed authorial determination of meaning. The interpretation of Collingwood's texts is a case in point. There is an ineliminable indeterminacy of meaning relating to Collingwood's reading of Hegel and his perceptions of how Hegel's ideas may function as an influence upon his own work. Strategic questions of how to appeal to a contemporary audience intermingle with questions of how he is to develop his own philosophy in the light of past and present philosophical assumptions, so that Collingwood's insight into and use of Hegel as an influence upon his own thinking is ambiguous.

The assumption that the interpretation of ideas can be univocal and unambiguous, which Collingwood maintains, is also present in Hegel, and forms part of the influence of Hegel upon Collingwood. The complexity of Collingwood's Hegel and the fault lines of Collingwood's use of Hegel thereby also casts doubt upon Hegel's own presumptions about philosophy and intellectual history. Hegel presents his ideas as a clear systemic review of thought and reality but there remain ambiguities in his formulation of a system. Hegel's system, however, can be and has been read as either closed or open, and the texts do not decisively relieve the ambiguity. Hegel also read the history of philosophy as a series of necessary and progressive stages of thought, which arise out of distinct historic contexts. But this reading of the past does not allow sufficiently for the ambiguities in which the philosophies of say, Plato and Hobbes are offered.⁴¹ Collingwood's philosophy, like that of Hegel's, is ambiguous and relates ambiguously to its influences and in so doing casts doubt upon Collingwood's and Hegel's readings of the operation of historical influences.⁴²

Notes

1. Collingwood's published writings are here taken to be those that he published during his lifetime, while unpublished writings include those that have been published subsequently and those that remain unpublished.
2. See Taylor (1975) and Popper (1945).
3. Derrida (1978) and Gadamer (1975).
4. Collingwood (1978), 22–29.
5. *Ibid.*, 53–77.
6. *Hist*, vol.1, 128.
7. Collingwood (1994), 311–312.
8. Collingwood (1945), 128.
9. *Ibid.*, 128–129.
10. Collingwood (1994), 312.
11. Collingwood (1945), 128.
12. Collingwood (1994), 332.
13. See Browning (2007).
14. Collingwood (1917), 2.
15. *Ibid.*, 2.
16. *Ibid.*, 3.
17. *Ibid.*, 4.
18. *Ibid.*, 4.
19. *Ibid.*, 10.
20. Collingwood (1920d).
21. *Ibid.*, 6.
22. Collingwood, (1920a), 78.
23. *Ibid.*, 28.
24. Collingwood (1920c), 10.
25. Collingwood (1920b), 8.
26. *Ibid.*, 10.
27. Collingwood (1933/1934), 8.
28. *Ibid.*, 10.
29. Collingwood (1999).
30. Collingwood (1932).
31. Collingwood (1933).
32. Collingwood (1924), 2.
33. Collingwood (1938).
34. See Donagan (1962). Donagan argues that the later Collingwood differs markedly from the earlier Collingwood, in that the later Collingwood subordinates philosophy to history.
35. Collingwood (1992), 272.
36. Collingwood (1992).
37. Collingwood (1992).
38. Gadamer (1975).
39. On Derrida's reading of Hegel, see also the chapter by Cohen (this volume).
40. Derrida (1978), 158. See also Norris (1987), where Norris argues that Derrida does not deny the role of intentionality in the determination of meaning, but rather sees it as playing a role, but not the decisive one.

41. See the essays in Browning (1999).
42. For commentary on the ambiguities of interpretation in the history of political thought, see Browning (2010).

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11

Substantive Philosophy, Infallibilism and the Critique of Metaphysics: Hegel and the Historicity of Philosophical Reason

Kenneth R. Westphal

Introduction: philosophy: its history and ours

One reason for chronic misunderstanding of Hegel's challenging and revolutionary views is that important relations between philosophy and its history are often over-simplified, not least because the issues and views of historical philosophers are too often reduced to stereotypes if not caricatures. For example, if the views of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers were as meagre as Richard Rorty's characterizations in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*,¹ philosophy's history would rightly be dismissed. It must be said, however, that Rorty's book could only impress readers woefully ignorant of the history of philosophy. The views Rorty presented and criticized were – by now we should be able to use the past tense – the caricatures of historical views then typical in graduate seminars in (largely) analytical departments. I was fortunate to have studied in what was one of the few analytic departments which took (and still takes) historical philosophy seriously as philosophy.²

My point is not, however, simply to praise historical scholarship in philosophy. Historians of philosophy too often emphasize exposition over critical assessment of the views they examine. For example, the question whether in the *Meditations* Descartes argued in a vicious circle may after 400 years seem tiresome. More exacting examination of the

Meditations within their context – including Pyrrhonian scepticism – reveals instead that the question is, How many vicious circles infect Descartes' *Meditations*? Use of Hegel's method of strictly internal critique (discussed below, pp. 203–207) reveals the five.³ Yet it will also not do simply to distinguish 'philosophers' from 'mere' historical scholars; historical philosophy provides (among much else) an indispensable benchmark for contemporary approaches and (purported) results. For example, contemporary analytic philosophers tend to restrict their consideration of Hume to his two *Enquiries*. Quine, to his credit, referred to an extremely important section in Hume's *Treatise*, 'Of Scepticism with regard to the senses'.⁴ Yet Quine did not read this section closely; its careful examination suffices to show that Quine's semantics in *Word and Object* (1960) is incoherent: his behaviourist approach to meaning requires semantic externalism, whilst his trademark theses of the indeterminacy of translation and of the inscrutability of reference require semantic internalism.⁵

'Philosophers' as well as 'historians' must reconsider the relations between philosophy and its history, not as they now are or are presumed to be, but as they can and ought to be. To reconsider relations between philosophy and its history productively, it is illuminating to reconsider Hegel's views on this topic, and two central reasons for their rejection by mainstream analytic philosophers. Before doing so, we should acknowledge and set aside an historical issue, in order to focus on some central systematic relations between philosophy and history.

In 1841, at age 66 and turned conservative, Schelling was brought by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to Berlin to 'stamp out the dragonseed of Hegelian pantheism root and branch'.⁶ Ever since, the 'received view' of Hegel and his philosophy has largely been that of his detractors, who were untroubled about accuracy or considered assessment.⁷ The level of rhetorical invective was no less at the advent of distinctively analytical philosophy. Famously, Moore and Russell revolted against British Idealism, with Hegel tossed in for good measure.⁸ Replying to F. C. S. Schiller's review of *The Analysis of Mind* in 1922, Russell exhorted: 'I should take "back to the 18th century" as a battle-cry, if I could entertain any hope that others would rally to it'.⁹ Russell stated that his differences with Schiller, a British pragmatist, were so fundamental that they could not be settled by logical argument without begging the question (*petitio principii*), so that 'the remarks which I shall have to make will be of the nature of rhetoric rather than logic'.¹⁰ In this connection Russell acknowledged, 'I dislike the heart as an inspirer of beliefs; I much prefer the spleen....'¹¹

He then excoriated romanticism, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and futurism for having contributed nothing 'that deserves to be remembered'.¹² Unfortunately, most analytic philosophers were taken in by Russell's rhetorical invective, in part because few could know that at this time Russell regarded Schiller as 'certainly among the two or three most eminent of living British philosophers' and was writing very strong recommendations for him!¹³ The results of Russell's invective linger in the remarkable capacity philosophers still have, as Frederick Will once remarked to me, no longer to understand what one says as soon as one mentions the name 'Hegel'. Passions and factionalism easily thwart reasonable discussion and rational assessment, also in philosophy, and especially so during the ideologically inflamed Twentieth Century, which took its toll upon philosophy in ways only now being plumbed (in mainstream Anglophone philosophy).¹⁴

In the twentieth century, philosophical methods and strategies proliferated; in many regards, for the good. Too often, though, practitioners formed schools or 'cultural circles' (*Kulturkreise*, as they were called by Logical Positivists), many of which defined themselves in opposition to what they regarded as Hegelianism. Unlike Russell, Carnap advocated a principle of tolerance, which he exhibited generously in *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* ('The Logical Structure of the World', 1928), gladly citing every source which pointed toward a growing, credible consensus about how best to philosophize; twice he cited Dilthey favourably (§§12, 23), Nietzsche thrice (§§65, 67, 163). At that time, he was on excellent speaking terms with Heidegger. Unfortunately, his ecumenical attitude soon subsided, as he wrote to Flitner and publicized in his impatient and uncomprehending remarks on the purported metaphysics of Hegel and Heidegger.¹⁵

The Second World War, the rise of engineering and the sciences, the Cold War and misplaced chauvinism and nationalism took heavy tolls also on philosophy, though they are not the only causes of the fragmentation of the field. Another key reason for the easy triumph of Logical Positivism in the US was noted by William Hay, who remarked to me: 'Dewey's message was, "Go out and do it!" His good students got the message, leaving behind in the academy the starry-eyed admirers'. Hay remarked upon a trend; he neither said nor thought that there were no competent pragmatists left in US universities, but about the trend he is correct: most of Dewey's best students went into education, policy studies, government and social services.

In view of the fragmentation and contracting historical perspective typical in the field today – which is part of the context and purpose

of this volume and the conference which spawned it – it is illuminating to look back to the end of the nineteenth Century, when philosophy was vigorously international, multi-disciplinary, historical *and* systematic – and polyglot. All academics had working rudiments, most had reading fluency, in English, French, German, some Latin and often some Attic Greek. In its first decade (1876–1885), *Mind* published numerous reports on the state of the art in philosophy and psychology – broadly conceived to include physiology and ethology – across Europe and North America. Their articles and book reviews reflected this broad, inclusive vigour; their index for the decade is fascinating. *Mind* published extended reports by leading figures on recent philosophy in Cambridge, London, Oxford, Dublin, Scotland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and the USA; on psychology in Holland, on physiological psychology and on psychology of perception in Germany. *Mind* published three reports on philosophy journals in France, Germany, Italy and the USA; one on physiology journals; two reports on pathology, two more on physiology and pathology, and two on functions of the cerebrum. *Mind* published critical review articles on studies of English philosophy and its history by authors in France and Germany, and reviewed such studies by others, including one from Russia. These articles were keen to understand and assess how foreign philosophers with different philosophical perspectives and orientations understood and assessed English philosophy. In those same years *Mind* published extended, detailed articles on such topics as the relation of Greek philosophy to modern thought, recent Hegelian contributions to English philosophy, a ‘biographical sketch of an infant’ by Darwin, on whether there can ‘be a natural science of man’ by T. H. Green, on von Hartmann’s *Phänomenologie des sittlichen Bewußtseins* (‘Phenomenology of Moral Consciousness’), on Herman Lotze, on relations between philosophy and science, between psychology and philosophy, on comparative human psychology, on political economy as a moral science, on the classification of the sciences and on scientific philosophy as a theory of human knowledge. (For details, see this chapter’s Appendix.)

Consider, too, that Logical Positivism – infamous today among critics for excessive scientism (the notion that only science provides genuine knowledge) – began as an international, cosmopolitan, multi-disciplinary, polyglot movement, not only to promote scientific knowledge, but also to promote public education and progressive political reform.¹⁶ Several leading positivists were non-aligned Marxists or socialists, who had political as well as intellectual or cultural reasons to flee fascism

in Europe. Those who reached US shores soon felt the harsh winds of Cold War ideology and Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC, 1947–1975). Already alert to political reaction in Europe, they strategically shifted emphasis to the purely scientific, and hence to the (officially) non-political character of their philosophical programme.¹⁷ Logical Positivism began as an enlightenment programme, and if its methods indeed support enlightenment, it can achieve these aims by promoting and employing its methods, without announcing its enlightenment aims and social agenda. Carnap, for one, remained politically active in progressive causes throughout his life.¹⁸

These features of recent European philosophy contrast starkly to the fragmentation of so much of the field today – though I hasten to stress that there are important and equally illuminating exceptions in some areas of semantics and philosophy of mind, in cognitive science, in those areas of history and philosophy of science which aim to account philosophically for scientific knowledge (rather than trimming the sciences to fit their philosophical predilections) and in feminist philosophy.¹⁹ Also note that monolingual academic research, including philosophy, only developed after about 1950, only amongst larger linguistic groups, and primarily among Anglophones.

I have recounted these historical factors to highlight some of the social and intellectual currents, cross-currents and undercurrents which have conditioned (*inter alia*) philosophical thought in the past century, for better and worse, wittingly and unwittingly, for they have also conditioned thought about Hegel's thought. Both the received view of Hegel's thought and Hegel's thought itself require careful disentangling and re-assessment.²⁰ Why? Because philosophical issues are complex and subtle, while clarity of thought and assessment are difficult: we cannot afford to forego insights, no matter whither they come. Philosophical issues are greatly clarified and focussed by examining them with more than one set of concerns, and more than one approach or method. If Hegel held the views commonly ascribed to him, especially those ascribed to him by his critics, he and his writings would best be forgotten. Hegel's actual views are, however, very different, very sophisticated and in many important philosophical regards very powerful. Why then have Hegel's views been so obscured by convenient caricatures? His difficult style is only partly responsible: The common caricatures of Hegel's views are exactly what results by assimilating Hegel's actual views to the framework of common philosophical distinctions and options which Hegel himself had, for sound and considered

reasons, criticized, rejected and superceded. Unfortunately, too many expositors have failed to explain, or even to appreciate this important feature of Hegel's philosophy.

Consider a brief, illustrative example. It has widely been supposed that the only options in social ontology are two: either societies are more basic than their individual members (monolithic social holism), or conversely, individuals are more basic than societies (atomistic substantive individualism). Notice that this ontological dichotomy is manifest in the longstanding feud between the liberal individualist political centre and the monolithic collectivism of the fascist right and communist left.²¹ Plainly Hegel does not espouse atomistic individualism; whence he has been widely classified as a monolithic collectivist.²² However, Hegel recognized that those positions are not exhaustive. He originated the view I call 'moderate collectivism', later espoused by Marx, T. H. Green, Dewey and Meade, and now commonplace in recent European social thought: Neither individuals nor societies are more basic than the other; instead, individuals and their societies are mutually interdependent for their existence and their characteristics.²³

Long derided for (supposedly) neglecting epistemology, Hegel's profoundly anti-Cartesian epistemology in many important regards is still ahead of the field. Some of these regards can be appreciated by considering the modern epistemological predicament (§2), the residual commitment of ahistorical philosophers to justificatory infallibilism (§3), some necessary conditions of singular, specifically *cognitive* reference (§4) and pragmatic accounts of the *a priori* (§5). These points illuminate how Hegel's moderate collectivism (just mentioned) bears upon important justificatory relations between philosophy and its history mentioned at the outset. They also illuminate how recent history has affected, indeed distorted, our understanding of a central philosophical topic, one widely supposed to be non-political and in principle ahistorical: epistemology.

The modern epistemological predicament

The issue about social ontology just mentioned is closely linked to another about human knowledge. Outstanding individuals produced the scientific revolution. Though there were many of them, great minds like Galileo's or Newton's or Mendel's stand out, and the social and historical aspects of their achievements often disappear into the shadows of their staggering innovations. In the Seventeenth Century

this contrast appeared to be even more important, and more categorical, because of the contrast of the methods and the findings of newly established natural sciences, to the Neo-Aristotelian natural philosophy of what became known (none too charitably) as the Middle Ages. Pyrrhonian scepticism was used by Catholic theologians to assert the superiority of faith and divine revelation over reasoned knowledge. Commonly it was supposed that divine omnipotence entailed that God could produce any event without the occurrence of its typical cause(s), including those events which are – or at least appear to us to be – our experiences of objects and events in our surroundings. To establish something stable and durable in the sciences, Descartes famously sought to reject all of his preconceived opinions and pursue sceptical doubt so radically that he could establish secure and certain foundations for knowledge.²⁴ This involved rejecting everything – or so he supposed, ‘everything’ – he had been taught to believe by his senses, or through them by other people, in order to discover for himself knowledge which is demonstrably infallible because it survives the sceptical hypothesis that he might be deceived by an omnipotent *malin génie*. In this one fell swoop, Descartes bequeathed to posterity three key features of the Modern epistemological predicament, which survived translation into the Empiricist tradition and into analytic epistemology until at least the mid-1960s, when Gettier published his famous article, ‘Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?’

The three relevant features the Modern epistemological predicament can be stated as theses:

The Ego-centric Predicament:

What we seem to think, feel or experience is known infallibly, because it is exactly what it appears to us to be; the epistemological question is whether any of our experiences can be known to correspond to anything beyond our mental awareness.

Epistemological Individualism:

Only what one can know, in principle, by oneself can count as genuine knowledge.

Infallibilism about Justification:

Justification sufficient for knowledge entails the truth of what is believed; any belief less justified than that may be false.

These three theses entail two further converse theses:

Historicist Relativism:	If (or insofar as) human belief is (ineliminably, irreducibly) a social or historical phenomenon, truth and justification give way to social or historical relativism.
Refutation by Counter-Example:	If there is a logically possible alternative to a (philosophical) thesis or view, that thesis or view is not, and cannot be, justified sufficiently to count as knowledge.

Now the sciences are plainly historical and social phenomena. This is one reason why accounting for scientific knowledge within the constraints of the Modern epistemological predicament requires reference to what individuals can 'in principle' know through their own capacities, abilities and efforts. Accordingly, history figures in human knowledge only regarding the contingent and irrelevant chronology of the discovery of various important methods or truths. These same points hold, purportedly, also for philosophy: in principle, philosophy too is an ahistorical discipline.

Ahistorical philosophy and lingering infallibilism

Consider now, what reasons favour *ahistorical* philosophy? Two are prominent. One is the triumphalism of analytic philosophy, according to which conceptual 'analysis' (however understood) is the sole legitimate philosophical technique and province, so that other philosophical approaches are bankrupt. Because few historical philosophers used such 'analytic' methods, most history of philosophy is philosophically irrelevant. The second reason is the formalist view that philosophical understanding and insight require that issues and terminology can be rigorously defined and analysed formally, and that philosophical justification consists in logical deduction. In its extreme form, formalism rejects not only the history of philosophy, but all non-formal substantive domains of philosophy. More generous forms of formalism welcome all substantive and historical domains of philosophy, though only to the extent that they admit of suitably rigorous formalization. (I do not claim that all analytical philosophers fall into one of these groups; I merely

highlight two tendencies characteristic of analytic philosophers who eschew the philosophical relevance of philosophy's history.)

Both reasons favouring ahistorical philosophy are heirs to Hume's Verification Empiricism, according to which the only propositions which can be justified *a priori* are analytic, whereas synthetic propositions can only be justified, if at all, empirically.²⁵ ('Synthetic' propositions are statements which are logically consistent, and which have logically consistent negations (denials).) Generally speaking, ahistorical philosophers – whether broadly analytic or specifically formalist – assign synthetic propositions either to commonsense or to the empirical sciences, retaining for philosophy only the *a priori* domain of analytic propositions and their philosophical analysis.

In the wake of Gettier's (1963) article, this overt empiricism was subject to sustained criticism by analytic epistemologists. Many believe that analytic criticism of empiricism began with Quine's (1951) 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'; I beg to differ.²⁶ Much more significant, methodologically and substantively, was Carnap's explication (in 1950), advocacy and use of conceptual 'explication', which was (unwittingly) echoed by Gettier's critique of epistemology *qua* pure conceptual analysis.²⁷ Unfortunately, Carnap's crucial methodological shift has not often enough been recognized in theory nor followed in analytical practice.²⁸

One indication of this methodological mishap is the implicit, often unwitting, though pervasive and influential commitment to infallibilism about cognitive justification. In this regard both empiricists and many self-styled post-empiricists remain committed Cartesians. I do not claim that contemporary philosophers, whether analytic or formalist, expressly affirm justificatory infallibilism. Rather, infallibilism can be identified as a pervasive suppressed premise in much contemporary philosophical reasoning. The commitment to infallibilism among contemporary philosophers is indicated by their use of counter examples to refute, or at least to defeat the justification of philosophical views, including philosophical accounts of empirical or specifically scientific knowledge. It is widely presumed that relevant counter examples need only be logically possible. However, mere logical possibilities defeat justification *only if* justification consists in strict deduction. *This* presumed requirement of strict deduction for rational justification *is* their commitment to infallibilism.

Consider briefly, e.g., global perceptual scepticism. Global perceptual sceptics stress that as a matter purely of logic, all our beliefs or experiences could be as they are, even if none of them were true, justified or veridical.²⁹ From this, they infer that we have no perceptual knowledge,

or more cautiously that we cannot, or do not know that we have any perceptual knowledge; or else they challenge us to prove that we have perceptual knowledge while barring appeal to any putative cognitive relations between our beliefs and experiences and their putative worldly objects.³⁰ Global perceptual sceptics demand that our cognitive capacities be proven fit for any logically possible environment before trusting them in our actual environment of spatio-temporal objects, events and people. This sceptical challenge may appear unanswerable. However, it presupposes that logical deduction is not only sufficient, but necessary for cognitive justification. This is justificatory infallibilism.³¹

The widespread, if unwitting presumption of infallibilism belies insufficient attention to the contrast between formal and non-formal domains. Strictly speaking, formal domains are those which involve no existence postulates. Strictly speaking, the one purely formal domain is a careful reconstruction of Aristotle's Square of Opposition.³² All further logical or mathematical domains involve various sorts of existence postulates, including semantic postulates. We may define 'formal domains' more broadly to include all formally defined logistic systems.³³ However, the relevance of any logistic system to any non-formal, substantive domain rests, not upon formal considerations alone, but also upon substantive considerations of how helpful any use of a logistic system may be within a non-formal, substantive domain.³⁴ Deduction, within any specified logistic system, *suffices* for justification *only* within the formal domain specified by that logistic system. However, in non-formal, substantive domains, justificatory infallibilism is not too stringent for rational justification, *in principle* it is *irrelevant* to non-formal domains. Logical deduction may be relevant to rational justification in non-formal, substantive domains, but in principle it is *insufficient* for justification in those domains. Logical possibilities are expressed by synthetic propositions. In non-formal, substantive domains, mere logical possibilities as such have *no* cognitive status and so cannot refute or otherwise undermine rational justification in the non-formal, substantive domains of empirical knowledge (and of morals), for the reasons next summarized.³⁵

Some necessary conditions of our singular *cognitive* reference

Whatever conceptual content or linguistic meaning synthetic statements may have, no synthetic statement has cognitive status unless and until it is referred by the Speaker (the renowned S) to particulars he

or she has located in space and time. Until it is so referred, that statement does not suffice for predication, i.e., for ascription of any (putative) characteristics to any (putative) individual(s). No description as such suffices for ascription (predication), and ascription alone does not suffice for *justified* ascription, which is required for knowledge. In principle, specificity of description cannot secure singularity of reference, because any description may be either empty or ambiguous, because either no object, or several objects, may satisfy it. Russell's theory of definite descriptions suffices as a semantic account of conceptual content or linguistic meaning to avoid putative reference to non-existent (subsistent) entities.³⁶ However, in principle definite descriptions cannot suffice for epistemology. Including 'the' or even 'the one and only' (or any other putative singular referring device) within an attributive phrase cannot rule out that that attributive phrase is either empty or ambiguous (because it has more than one corresponding object). Consequently, in principle merely uttering descriptions is insufficient for knowledge, because until a descriptive statement is referred to particulars Someone has located in space and time, it has no assessable truth value, no assessable accuracy or appropriateness and no assessable justification.³⁷

A closely related point holds of tokens of demonstrative terms, such as 'this', 'that', 'now', 'then', 'here', 'there', 'these' or 'those': Whatever semantic or linguistic use, content or 'character' such terms may have, no use of such a term suffices for specifically *cognitive* reference unless and until the Speaker specifies the relevant spatio-temporal scope of the region(s) occupied by the event(s) or object(s) to which he or she refers. Predication requires both description and reference; *cognition* in non-formal, substantive domains requires specifying, at least roughly, the particulars one purports to know in part by specifying some of their characteristics, and in part by specifying their spatio-temporal region(s). Only upon that basis can one make any definite cognitive claim; only on that basis can its truth value – or its accuracy or its appropriateness – be assessed; and only on that basis can its justification be either claimed or assessed. For these reasons, philosophy of language (and of mind) can augment epistemology, but they cannot supplant it, because knowledge requires both specifically *cognitive* reference, and justification, neither of which can be reduced to, nor supplanted by, semantics of linguistic meaning or philosophy of mind.

These requirements for specifically cognitive reference have a striking and important implication: They secure one key aim of meaning verificationism without invoking meaning verificationism!³⁸ Regardless of

whether the concepts or terms used in cognitive judgment are *a priori*, *a posteriori* or mixed, whatever may be the conceptual content or linguistic meaning of our claims, judgments or propositions, they have no cognitive significance for knowledge unless and until they are referred to particulars we have located within space and time. This requirement is a necessary condition for the truth-evaluability of our claims, etc., and it is a necessary condition for us to know enough about our claims and whatever about which we make those claims to discover and thereby to determine their truth value. It is also necessary (though not sufficient) for our assessing the justification of our cognitive claims about those particulars.

These basic considerations about singular cognitive reference justify four important consequences: (1) Within non-formal, substantive domains, mere logical possibilities as such have no cognitive status, and so can neither defeat nor undermine justification. In non-formal, substantive domains, logical gaps as such are not automatically cognitive or justificatory gaps. (2) Traditional metaphysical claims to knowledge beyond sensory experience are cognitively vacuous. (3) Global sceptical hypotheses – whether Pyrrhonian, Cartesian or Humean – are cognitively vacuous. (4) The causal descriptions found in contemporary ‘causal theories’ of mental or behavioural phenomena are pseudo-scientific. They cannot count as *theories* because those descriptions are too vague even for casual ascription, much less for justified – or even justifiable – causal ascription, which alone could count as theory (in contrast to mere proposal or promissory note) or knowledge.

If these remarks may not ‘sound’ like Hegel, so much worse for the din of the Hegel mythology. These remarks summarize the key reasons for, and the key implications of, Kant’s specifically *cognitive* semantics. Kant’s decisive achievement in this regard has gone unrecognized until recently,³⁹ because most readers took Kant at his word, that his theory of knowledge requires his transcendental idealism. Most analytic philosophers rejected both by rejecting ‘the’ synthetic *a priori*: a position they share with Hume. Neo-Kantian attempts to disentangle Kant’s theory of knowledge from his transcendental idealism were not very successful in this regard.⁴⁰

Hegel took a more challenging though more productive tack: to avoid *petitio principii*, the assessment of other philosophical views must be based upon thorough, strictly internal critique. By 1802, Hegel had identified two key points of a sound internal critique of Kant’s transcendental idealism.⁴¹ In the 1807 *Phenomenology*, Hegel argued independently for Kant’s

cognitive semantics, without any appeal to transcendental idealism (nor to any comparable view), via an internal critique of aconceptual 'knowledge by acquaintance' and of the purported cognitive sufficiency of definite descriptions. In 'Force and Understanding',⁴² Hegel used this cognitive semantics to undergird Newton's Rule 4 of Natural Philosophy and to rebut a host of empiricist objections to Newton's causal realism about gravitational force.⁴³ In 'Self-Consciousness',⁴⁴ Hegel used this same cognitive semantics to undermine Pyrrhonian scepticism, and also, by implication, Cartesian and global perceptual scepticisms as well. In 'Reason Observing Nature: Psychology',⁴⁵ Hegel exposed the pseudo-scientific pretensions of purported causal-deterministic empirical psychology.⁴⁶

The first two chapters of Hegel's *Logic* – the infamous triad of being, nothing and becoming; and the analysis of *Dasein* ('being-there') – in a different way also argue for this same semantics of singular *cognitive* reference. Both here, as in 'Sense Certainty',⁴⁷ Hegel demonstrates that determining (at least roughly) the origin of any relevant, implicit spatio-temporal reference system (the speaker) and (at least roughly) the scope of the relevant spatio-temporal region of any designated particular(s) is possible only by competent use of the concepts 'space', 'spaces', 'time', 'times', 'I' and 'individuation'. These concepts must be used competently in order to define or to learn any empirical concept. Hence neither ostensive designation nor singular cognitive reference are possible on the basis of concept-free 'knowledge by acquaintance', i.e., 'sense certainty'. Accordingly, the term 'knowledge' in Russell's account of 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description' has no justified use; his account presumed rather than analysed our knowledge of particulars.⁴⁸

I do not claim that these are the sole aims or results of Hegel's analyses; I do maintain that Hegel succeeds in demonstrating these results. This is plenty of stout philosophy for the sparse and compact pages Hegel devoted to them. Neither do I claim that these are obviously Hegel's analyses or conclusions; I do maintain that scrupulous interpretation of his text and issues, within their historical and systematic contexts, substantiates my attributions to him of these views.

The pragmatic *a priori*

One standard tenet of empiricism is semantic atomism. In many basic cases, the meaning of a term or the content of concept can be defined or

specified independently of other terms or concepts. Carnap came closest to working out semantic atomism in detail, with the ultimate result that semantic atomism is false: The meaning of any one term or the content of any one concept can be defined or specified only in conjunction with at least some other terms or concepts (and we cannot determine which ones *a priori*). For any terms or concepts of interest in philosophy, this moderate (or 'molecular') semantic holism typically is fairly extensive: The meanings of philosophically salient terms or the content of philosophically salient concepts typically form networks or families, which themselves are more or less integrated with others.⁴⁹ Hegel concurred, mainly because, like Kant, he recognized that linguistic meaning or conceptual content – and accordingly also the content of any judgment – is a function of drawing distinctions and forming contrasting classifications of particulars of greater or lesser generality or specificity.

Moderate semantic holism, together with the failures of verificationist theories of linguistic meaning or conceptual content, pose a general problem about whether or how it is possible to assess the more general, comprehensive concepts involved in the principles which structure any significant conceptual network, because these general concepts are not linked very directly to empirical test; e.g., the enormous shift from Aristotelianism to Newtonianism, both in science and in common sense. This issue looms large already in the case of empirical systems of classification or empirical theories; it is even larger and more urgent within philosophy. One family of attempts to address this issue falls under the heading, 'the pragmatic *a priori*'.⁵⁰ Recently, there have been calls to develop a pragmatic account of the *a priori* on an empiricist basis.⁵¹ Empiricism is too meagre;⁵² a much better basis, Hegel saw, is Kant's Critical philosophy.⁵³

Here I can characterize only one of Hegel's important insights: that even our broadest (non-formal) concepts, the principles they structure and their proper use can be assessed rationally, though only by attending to the social and the historical aspects of rational inquiry and rational justification. As noted, justification in non-formal domains requires more than logical deduction. Traditionally – and this tradition continued at least until 1970⁵⁴ – this 'something more' is supposed to be the collocation of experiential evidence, however understood. The problem is not simply one of understanding empirical justification in general. The fundamental problem is that justification in non-formal domains confronts the Pyrrhonian Dilemma of the Criterion.⁵⁵ Put briefly, this dilemma concerns identifying and justifying basic criteria

of justification in disputed domains, in which the dispute also concerns criteria of justification. In such domains, is it possible to identify and to justify any sound criteria of justification, while avoiding dogmatism, *petitio principii*, viciously circular reasoning or just plain error? This problem is more subtle, and more severe, than either Chisholm's 'Problem' of the Criterion or Williams' Aggripan 'Trilemma'.⁵⁶ In non-formal domains, the Dilemma of the Criterion refutes coherentist and foundationalist models of rational justification, and highlights the severe weaknesses of 'Reflective Equilibrium'.⁵⁷

Though widely regarded as insoluble, the Pyrrhonian Dilemma of the Criterion is soluble, and Hegel solved it in 1807.⁵⁸ One key to solving the Dilemma of the Criterion is to analyse, justify and exploit the possibility of constructive self-criticism. Some analytic philosophers mention the importance of self-criticism; none have examined its possibility. In the body of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel uses his analysis to assess a broad, representative range of models of human knowledge and action, including scepticism. This assessment enables him to argue, on the one hand, that the Dilemma of the Criterion is soluble and on the other, that we are able to know the world itself, at least in part.⁵⁹ Analysing and justifying our capacity to know the world itself, Hegel further argues, also requires our mutual critical assessment.⁶⁰ Very briefly, this is because each of us is a decidedly *finite* rational being. We each know only a fragment of knowledge pertaining to any substantive issue of justification. We each have our own philosophical strengths, predilections and preferences – and their complementary shortcomings in other regards. Most basically, we are each fallible. Consequently, in any case of justifying or purporting to justify any significant, substantive claim or judgment, even the most scrupulously self-critical amongst us faces the difficulty in practice of determining whether or the extent to which we ourselves have justified our judgment because we have sufficiently fulfilled all relevant justificatory requirements, or whether instead we merely believe we have fulfilled those requirements and thus merely believe we have justified our conclusion.⁶¹ To make this distinction reliably and effectively requires the constructive critical assessment of others; and likewise in each of their cases too.

Consequently, in non-formal, substantive domains, rational justification is fundamentally a social phenomenon. In non-formal domains, both principles and specific claims are and remain justified to the extent that they are adequate to their intended domains and are superior to their relevant alternatives, whether historical or contemporary. Hence

in non-formal domains rational justification is fundamentally also an historical phenomenon. Hegel was the first to understand and to argue that these social and historical aspects of rational justification in non-formal domains are consistent with – indeed, ultimately they justify – realism about the objects of empirical knowledge and strict objectivity about practical norms.⁶² It is still widely supposed that ‘pragmatic realism’ is oxymoronic. This supposition, Hegel rightly argued, rests on a series of false dichotomies (including the points discussed earlier about social ontology (§1), and the Modern epistemological predicament (§2)).⁶³ Hegel elevated the history of philosophy to a specifically *philosophical* discipline because he recognized (in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*⁶⁴) that comprehensive, critical, *philosophical* history of philosophy is essential to philosophical justification in non-formal, substantive domains.

In sum, cultural and intellectual history play central, ineliminable roles within rational justification in non-formal, substantive domains.⁶⁵ Hence in justifying substantive philosophical views, history of philosophy plays a central, ineliminable role. Both Aristotle and Wilfrid Sellars understood this point: Because philosophical issues are complex, elusive and easily obscured by incautious phrasing, one must consult carefully the opinions of the many and the wise. Sellars found the wise throughout philosophical history, from the pre-Socratics to the present day,⁶⁶ because core issues regarding the logical forms of thought and the connection of thought with things are perennial, arising in distinctive, paradigmatic forms in each era.⁶⁷ One result of Sellars’ expansive research is a catalogue and critical assessment of philosophical locutions, that is, of what might be called the ‘ordinary language’ of philosophers.⁶⁸ Only by examining these can one find the most suitable, least misleading formulations of issues, specific theses, distinctions, and their relations. Sellars knew that the anti-systematic, piecemeal method of analytic puzzle-solving was doomed in its own terms by 1950 when Carnap adopted a moderately holistic semantics.⁶⁹ Thus even when cast in the formal mode of speech – as analyses of terms or sentences – philosophy must be systematic, and it can be systematic only by also being historical. The interconnections among philosophical issues, both direct and indirect, provide crucial checks against inapt formulations.

Ultimately, if surprisingly, Hegel’s transformation of Kant’s Transcendental Logic – Kant’s account of the cognitive roles of our basic categories – meshes very well with Carnap’s account and use of conceptual explication, though Hegel provided the epistemology Carnap sought to circumvent. Conversely, Carnap’s use of inference to specify

the meanings of terms or concepts – by specifying which inference can, and which cannot, be drawn by using the term or concept in question⁷⁰ – provides a vital hermeneutic tool for interpreting Hegel's difficult texts, because Hegel contextually specified his terms, concepts and principles, and contextually redefined them as he developed his analyses.

Conclusion

Philosophers disregard the history of philosophy – and intellectual and cultural history more broadly – at their own peril, because philosophy – like all forms of human inquiry – is an historical and social, as well as rational phenomenon.⁷¹ Ignoring or dismissing these dimensions, or neglecting the semantic and justificatory links between various issues or topics within philosophy, condemns us to the very relativism and historicism decried by ahistorical philosophers. Neglecting these social and historical dimensions tends to reduce philosophy to a talking shop, which would abnegate our intellectual responsibility, individually and collectively. The spectre of historicist relativism is exorcized by searching critique of the Modern epistemological predicament (§2) and by a sober, critical assessment of the social and historical aspects of human inquiry and rational justification in substantive domains (§§3–5). One central reason Hegel's philosophy has been so widely misunderstood is that he recognized these points and made them central to his philosophy, starting in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which he argued *en detail* that any tenable philosophical theory of human knowledge must take the natural sciences into very close consideration.⁷² Whatever may be the sympathies of some of his expositors, Hegel agreed with Carnap that

we too have 'emotional needs' in philosophy, though these concern clarity of concepts, precision of methods, responsible theses, and achievement through cooperation in which each individual plays his part.⁷³

Hegel referred to this as 'the rigours of the concept', and he repudiated well in advance Rorty's advocacy of 'edifying philosophy'.⁷⁴ By now our societies should be sufficiently open, and our conceptual self-understanding sufficiently clear and cogent, to dispense with the fiction of the ahistorical, asocial atomistic person,⁷⁵ and the fallacy that rejecting that fiction straps us with totalitarian collectivism or historicist relativism. These ideological fictions have too long eclipsed the progressive, left-liberal moderate collectivism developed by Hegel, T. H. Green and John Dewey. Severing

philosophical issues from the rest of human life declines inevitably into sterile scholasticism, and grants too much public sway to poor reasoning, faction and outright unreason. This we cannot afford, ever again.

Appendix: a snapshot from London of philosophy circa 1880

In its first decade, *Mind* published numerous reports on the state of the art in philosophy and psychology (including physiology and comparative ethology &c) in Europe and North America. These reports are listed in two groups: (1) by region (complete), (2) by field, topic or period (selected).⁷⁶

Journal: *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*.

Founding Editor: George Croom Robertson, Professor of Mind and Logic, University College, London.

First issue: January 1876.

Reports:

1. By Region:

Cambridge, Philosophy at (H. Sidgwick), 1.2 (1876): 235–246.

Dublin, Philosophy at (W.H.S. Monck), 1.3 (1876): 382–392.

Dutch Universities, Philosophy in the (J.P.N. Land), 3.9 (1878): 87–104.

France, Philosophy in (Th. Ribot), 2.7 (1877): 366–386.

Germany, Visual Perception, The Question of, in (J. Sully), 3.9 (1878): 1–23, 3.10 (1878): 167–195.

Germany, Physiological Psychology in (J. Sully), 1.1 (1876): 20–43.

Germany, Philosophy in (W. Wundt), 2.8 (1877): 493–518.

Holland, Psychology in (T.M. Lindsay), 1.1 (1876): 144–145.

Italy, Philosophy in (G. Barzellotti), 3.12 (1878): 505–538.

London, Philosophy in (G.C. Robertson), 1.4 (1876): 531–544.

Oxford, Philosophy at (M. Pattison), 1.1 (1876): 82–97.

Scottish Universities, Philosophy in the (J. Veitch), 2.5 (1877): 74–91, 2.6 (1877): 207–234.

United States, Philosophy in the (G.S. Hall), 4.13 (1879): 89–105.

2. By Field, Topic or Period:

Cerebrum, Functions of, (G.C. Robertson), 2.5 (1877): 108–111, 5.18 (1880): 254–259.

English Thought in the 18th Century, by L. Stephen (G.C. Robertson), 2.7 (1877): 352–366.

English Philosophy, Kuno Fischer on (C. Read), 4.15 (1879): 346–362.

German Philosophical Journals (R. Flint), 1.1 (1876): 136–143.

- Greek Philosophy, Relation to Modern Thought (A.W. Benn), 7.25 (1882): 65–88, 7.26 (1882): 231–254.
- Hegelian Contributions to English Philosophy, Recent, (T. M. Lindsay), 2.8 (1877): 476–493.
- Hegelianism and Psychology, (R. B. Haldane), 3.12 (1878): 568–571.
- Infant, A Biographical Sketch of an (C. Darwin), 2.7 (1877): 285–294.
- La Morale anglaise contemporaine*, M. Guyau, (F. Pollock), 5.18 (1880): 280–288.
- Life, Teleological Mechanics of*, by E. Pflüger, (anon.) 3.10 (1878): 264–268.
- Lotze, Hermann, (T.M. Lindsay), 1.3 (1876): 363–382.
- Natural Science of Man, Can there be a?, (T. H. Green) 7.25 (1882): 1–29, 7.26 (1882): 161–185, 7.27 (1882): 321–348.
- ‘Mind’, History of the word, (J. Earle), 6.23 (1881): 301–320.
- Pathology, Reports on, (W. R. Gowers), 1.2 (1876): 267–273, 1.4 (1876): 552–554.
- Phänomenologie des sittlichen Bewußtseins*, E. von Hartmann, (W. C. Coupland) 4.14 (1879): 278–284.
- Philosophical Journals, (R. Flint, J. Sully, W. C. Coupland), 1.2 (1876): 273–282. (French, German, US).
- Philosophical Journals, (R. Flint, J. Sully), 1.3 (1876): 416–424; 1.4 (1876): 555–560. (French, German, Italian).
- Philosophie, Histoire de la, en Angleterre depuis Bacon jusqu’ à Locke*, by Ch. de Rémusat, (C. Read), 4.13 (1879): 128–132.
- Philosophy and Science, (S. H. Hodgson) 1.1 (1876): 67–81, 1.2 (1876): 221–235; 1.3 (1876): 351–362.
- Physiological Journals, (J. G. McKendrick) 1.1 (1876): 132–135.
- Physiology & Pathology, Reports on, (W. R. Gowers), 1.2 (1876): 267–273.
- Physiology & Pathology, Reports on, (J. G. McKendrick, W. R. Gowers), 1.3 (1876): 409–416.
- Political Economy as a Moral Science, (W. Cunningham), 3.11 (1878): 369–383, (D. Syme), 4.13 (1879): 147.
- Psychology and Philosophy, (G. C. Robertson), 8.29 (1883): 1–21.
- Psychology of Man, Comparative, The, (H. Spencer), 1.1 (1876): 7–20.
- Psychology, A Science or a Method? (J. A. Stewart), 1.4 (1876): 445–451.
- Sciences, On the Classification of the, (H. M. Stanley), 9.34 (1884): 265–274.
- Scientific Philosophy: A Theory of Human Knowledge, (F. E. Abbott), 7.28 (1882): 461–495.
- Index to *Mind* (1876–1885), vols. 1–9: *Mind* 10.40 (1885): i–xiii.

Notes

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Friedrich Albert Moritz Schlick (14. April 1882, Berlin–22. Juni 1936, Wien); cf. Stadler (1997, 2009) and the bibliography under ‘Schlick’.

1. Rorty (1979) (2nd expanded edition, 2009).
2. I gratefully acknowledge my many debts to the Philosophy Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where (during my time there) seven regular faculty taught or researched Kant’s philosophy, and where good students are still provided the time to study the field in the breadth and depth required for command of the relevant issues, literature and languages. One of its most illustrious members, Julius Rudolf Weinberg (1908–1971; cf. Bennett et al. 1970–1971), was perhaps the first Jew to obtain a permanent philosophy post in the US after WWII without changing his name. (Well into the 1950s it was common for US businesses to require a letter of reference from a prospective employee’s minister (or priest); i.e., Christians only, please.)
3. Westphal (1989), 18–34.
4. Hume (2001), 1.4.2; Quine (1953), 174, cf. 38–39, 66, 73–74, and Quine (1969), 71–72, 74–75.
5. See Westphal (forthcoming a). Semantic ‘internalism’ is the view that the meanings of a person’s statements is strictly a function of factors of which that person is aware, or of which he or she can become aware by simple reflection; in contrast, semantic ‘externalism’ maintains that at least some factors constitutive of semantic meaning are, or relate directly to, factors in that person’s surroundings (or, perhaps, organic conditions of his or her own body). Careful study of Hume’s account of ‘abstract ideas’ shows the utter untenability of purely extensional semantics of just the kind upon which Quine insisted – needlessly and dogmatically, as Carnap noted; see Westphal (2013e). (Quine’s two trademark theses defy brief summary; see Hylton (2006) and Kirk (2006).)
6. Quoted by Bunsen (1869, 2:133) from his instructions from Friedrich Wilhelm IV, in his request (*Berufungsschreiben*) to Schelling to take up Hegel’s vacant chair in Berlin, 1. August 1840.
7. For concise discussion, see Fulda (2003), 305–319. On Russell’s objections to Hegel, see Westphal (2010b).
8. On British Hegelianism, see Mander (this volume).
9. Russell (1994), CP 9:39.
10. *Ibid.*, 30.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 41.
13. The editorial introduction to Russell’s reply reproduces one of his letters of reference (*ibid.*, 37–38).
14. See Reisch (2005).
15. Carnap’s letter to Flitner (9 April 1931) is quoted by Gabriel (2004, 14); Carnap (1932) comments on Hegel’s and Heidegger’s purported metaphysics.
16. See Mormann (2004) and Uebel (2011).
17. McCumber (2001), Reisch (2005, 2007). (McCumber’s aim is to show that the issue merits examination.)
18. FBI (1954), Mormann (2000), 36; cf. Kallen (1946), Carnap (1963), 81–3.

19. See, e.g., Kaplan (see Almog and Leonardi, 2009), Wettstein (2004), Burge (2005), Haag (2007), Cleeremans (2003), Bayne et al. (2009), Harper (2011), Malament (2002), Wimsatt (2007), Antony and Witt (2002), Bartky (2002), (2012), Harding (2004), Keller and Longino (1996) and Kincaid et al. (2007).
20. See Stewart (1996).
21. See also the contribution to this volume by De Federicis on Gentile, which addresses related issues.
22. E.g., Popper (1945), Cassirer (1946); for critical discussion see Stewart (1996).
23. See Westphal (2003), §§29–37.
24. Med. 1, ¶1; AT 7:17, cf. 12.
25. Hume (1975), First *Enquiry*, §IV.
26. See Uebel (1992) and Westphal (forthcoming a).
27. See Carnap (1950b), 1–18; for discussion, see Westphal (2010–11).
28. The implications were noted at the time by Wick (1951), but his important point was rejected by true believers. Williamson (2007) is one of the few contemporary analytic philosophers who has developed views of philosophical method which address the insufficiency of classical conceptual analysis. Carus (2007) highlights the centrality of explication to Carnap's philosophy.
29. E.g., Stroud (1994b), 241–242, 245.
30. Stroud (1989), 34, 36, 48; (1994a), 301–304; (1996), 358.
31. For a detailed example, see Westphal (2013d).
32. See Wolff (1995), (2000), (2009), (2012).
33. See Lewis (1930), 39–40; rpt. (1970), 10.
34. See Lewis (1929), 298, Carnap (1950a); for discussion of Lewis, see Westphal (2010a), §2.
35. I mention morals only to note that it is exempt from the conditions for singular cognitive reference discussed in §4; see Westphal (2013c). I do not reject the use of formal analyses within philosophy; I recommend more careful attention to their use and usefulness within non-formal, substantive domains.
36. Russell (1905).
37. I accept externalist aspects of justification in perception, but these details are not presently germane.
38. For discussion of various definitions of empiricism, see Westphal (1989), 48–50.
39. Melnick (1989), Westphal (2004), Bird (2006).
40. I stress in *this* regard, I do not dismiss the philosophical achievements of neo-Kantians in other regards.
41. See Westphal (2009b).
42. PS, ch. 3; see Westphal (2008a, 2009a).
43. Newton's Rule 4 states: 'In experimental philosophy, propositions gathered from phenomena by induction should be considered either exactly or very nearly true notwithstanding any contrary hypotheses, until yet other phenomena make such propositions either more exact or liable to exceptions' (Newton 1999, 796).
44. PS, ch. 4.

45. PS, ch. 5, part A, §b.
46. See, respectively, Westphal (2009b), (2000), (2002–2003), (2008a); (2011a), (forthcoming b); (2013e).
47. PS, chapter 1; see Westphal (2000, 2002–2003).
48. Russell (1911). As for Russell's (1912, CP 6:365; 1914, 48–49 note) charge that Hegel failed to distinguish between identity and predication, Russell failed to recognize that the view Hegel criticizes conflates them; Hegel argues *for* their distinction by *reductio* of that conflation. For detailed discussion, see Westphal (2010b).
49. See Wick (1951), Kaplan (1971) and Westphal (1989), 51–67.
50. Lewis (1923), Rosenthal (1987) and Pancheri (1971).
51. Hempel (1988), Wolters (2003) and Mormann (2012).
52. Cf. Moore (1971) and Westphal (forthcoming a).
53. Cf. Buchdahl (1969).
54. Carnap's final and most sophisticated version of empiricist semantics appeared in 1963; it was soon recognized to be flawed because its intended atomistic semantics was inconsistent with the contribution to meaning made by the logical syntax of observation reports (Kaplan (1971), Westphal (1989), 50–67. The limitations of the deductivist approaches to justification central to Logical Positivism and Logical Empiricism were finally acknowledged in Grünbaum and Salmon (1988).
55. Sextus Empiricus (1933b), PH 2.4.20; cf. 1.14.116–117.
56. See Chisholm (1982), 65–75, Williams (1996), 60–68 and Westphal (1998), (2013a).
57. On 'Reflective Equilibrium', see Westphal (2003), §28; cf. Daniels (1996), 144–175.
58. Westphal (1989, 1998, 2011a, forthcoming b). The critical edition of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* neglects the Pyrrhonian Dilemma of the Criterion (GW 9:494, notes to pp. 53–61).
59. Westphal (2009a, 2011b).
60. Westphal (2009c, 2011a, forthcoming b).
61. For an explication of these requirements, see Westphal (2003), §11.
62. For discussion of Hegel's realism, see Ferrini (2009a), (2009b), Westphal (2008a, 2011b). For discussion of the strict objectivity provided by Hegel's methods for identifying and justifying basic practical norms, see Westphal (2013c).
63. Westphal (2003, 2011a, forthcoming b); cf. Will (1997).
64. Harris (1997) argues in detail that Hegel's history in the *Phenomenology* is far better than has been recognized, and that it contains Hegel's genuine philosophy of history.
65. Please recall that my topic here is rational justification. I do not limit cognitive justification to rational justification; externalist factors play crucial justificatory roles in perceptual knowledge.
66. For example, Sellars (1968, 62, 71, 77) mentions Parmenides thrice; the contemporary counterparts of Heraclitus are radical sense-datum theorists and causal process time-slicers.
67. Sellars (1968), 67–69.
68. Ibid.

69. See Carnap (1950a) and Wick (1951). Sellars and Herbert Feigl published Wick's article in the second volume of their journal. The methodological importance of this innovation by Carnap has also been widely neglected.
70. Carnap (1931), 91, (1956b), 49–52.
71. I argue for some related conclusions in Westphal (2010c).
72. See Ferrini (2009), Westphal (2008b, 2009a, 2013b).
73. Carnap (1928), *Aufbau* 1st edition, Preface, penultimate paragraph; (1966), xx/(2003), xvii.
74. PS GW 9:41.25/¶58; 12–14/¶¶7–10, resp.; cf. Rorty (1979), 365–384.
75. This is part of the 'individualism' criticized by Tyler Burge (2005, 2007), which appears, e.g., in philosophical appeals to 'Cruso cases'.
76. E.g., I have omitted articles by James and by Dewey, and the book note on Frege, *Begriffsschrift*. For references to comparable sources, I would be most grateful. This is a first step in such research. My thanks to *JStore* for making such research feasible, single-handedly, during the holidays (*JStore* files for *Mind* are searchable).

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Part IV

Hegel's Thought in Italy and France

12

Hegel in Italy (1922–1931): The Dispute on the Ethical State

Nico De Federicis

Introduction

Hegelianism was a central part of the philosophical experience in Italy between the nineteenth and the twentieth century. The most important Italian philosophers of recent history were Hegelians, so it may be said that the contribution of Italian scholarship to the study and dissemination of Hegelian thought played a role comparable to, if not eclipsing, those of other European countries.

The names of Augusto Vera (1813–1885) and Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) will be familiar to all students of the philosophy of their times. Although the interpretation of Hegel was not univocal in Italy, a recurring motif can be detected, especially in the case of the nineteenth-century Neapolitan school, which viewed philosophy as a means of promoting a moral and civic renewal of the nation. Accordingly, Hegel – the philosopher who posited reality as the core of philosophical theory and the state as the core of political theory – was perceived as the ideal ally by many Italian patriots, who sought to free the nascent Italian state from the spiritual and moral influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Nineteenth-century Italian Hegelianism bequeathed the legacy of a firm opposition between state and church that would henceforth constitute a constant thread in the history of philosophical thought in Italy.¹

The aim of this chapter is to present a salient episode in this history, one that unfolded in the 1920s when the paradigm of Hegelianism that had gradually evolved over the period of a century in Italy abruptly exploded in a confrontation between two heirs of the Hegelian tradition: Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944). I am referring to the famous dispute regarding the so-called ‘ethical state’ that marked

a crucial turning point in the intellectual history of the nation. From a political perspective, these two figures presented the opposing claims of liberalism and totalitarianism in a debate that marked the concluding chapter in the history of Hegelianism in Italy, mirroring the changing spirit of the times – the child, as it were, of the French Revolution and the father of nationalism.

At the same time, through a radical revision of speculative philosophy in the light of his own sense of historicism, Croce opened up new paths for Hegelianism by placing Hegel's legacy within a European perspective in terms of politics, and within a universal and cosmopolitan perspective from the point of view of philosophy. In what follows, I discuss the relationship between Gentile and Croce, embedding their thought in the traditions of Italian Hegelianism and in Italy's political history. Gentile argues for a 'substantial' view of society, which goes beyond the 'aggregative' view of society consisting of single individuals, but gives it a twist that is foreign to the Hegelian approach by turning it into an argument for a 'statolatry'. Croce, in contrast, focuses on the differentiation of concepts of politics and morals, which also leads him to separate the realm of the state from the realm of conscience. He sharply condemns Gentile's 'theological' reading of the Hegelian concept of ethical life. Gentile and Croce take up different elements of Hegel's practical philosophy, and arrive at fundamentally different conclusions. Whereas Gentile's reading can be said to be truer to the main Italian Hegelian tradition, Croce's reading avoids a narrow nationalistic focus of Hegel's political philosophy and remains true to a cosmopolitan idea of moral life.

Two Hegelian traditions

Hegelianism shone with particular brilliance in Italy during the period between the end of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century, which witnessed the resurrection of idealism and of a sense of nationhood. Neo-idealism was a trait shared by many European philosophical traditions of this age, but in Italy it was characterized by its distinct neo-Hegelian form. Two pivotal figures in the modern history of the country – Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile – played a central role in the promotion of this renaissance and exerted a considerable influence not only on philosophy, but also on politics, aesthetics, history and many other areas.

In the field of Hegelian philosophy, Croce and Gentile set up opposing battle lines, offering different formulations of speculative thought,

which each was seeking to revive in the light of his own 'reform' of Hegelian dialectics.² The divergent paths taken by these thinkers can be retraced to two earlier figures whose work had a fundamental impact on the Italian reception of Hegel. The first, and more unconventional one, was the renowned scholar of Italian literature Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883), to whom Croce was indebted for his concept of aesthetic form as a pure sentimental representation and 'individuality'. This would lead to his redrafting of speculative philosophy as historicism and his reformulation of logic from abstract to concrete forms, that is, into a concept of individuality within which history was symbiotic. The second and more orthodox figure was one of the most prominent nineteenth-century exponents of Hegelianism in Italy, Bertrando Spaventa (1817–1883), whose pupil Donato Jaia (1839–1914) was one of Gentile's teachers at the University of Pisa.

On a personal level, the relationship between Croce and Gentile is the story of a broken friendship. Their intellectual ties were formed during the closing years of the nineteenth century and were strengthened when Gentile, who had not yet succeeded in obtaining a professorship and was in financial difficulties, joined the journal *La Critica* that Croce had founded in 1903. Croce himself was not connected with any academic institution, but he was the most eminent philosopher of the country, and did his best to support the career of his younger colleague. In 1906, Gentile was finally appointed to the faculty of the University of Palermo.

Notwithstanding their many years of collaboration at *La Critica*, disparities in the two philosophers' Hegelianisms emerged early on, and were quite revealing. The first disagreement, which arose in 1897, revolved around their contrasting interpretations of Marxism. A few years later, they clashed a second time, this time on the role of history in philosophy; in 1913, this controversy was extended to the general idea of philosophy.³ I would like to pass over these two disputes and focus instead on the third and harshest confrontation, which centred on the concept of the ethical state. The origins of the controversy lie in the years 1921–1922, and the dispute fully erupted in 1924. By this time, Gentile was the leading theorist of the totalitarian political movement that had emerged in Italy in the aftermath of the First World War and came to power in October 1922, when Benito Mussolini was asked to form a new government in which Gentile obtained the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, his position as the official philosopher of Fascism was consolidated only in 1924, after the political crisis of June produced by the kidnapping and murder of the socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti.

In 1922, in his *Fragments of Ethics*,⁴ Croce challenged the notion of an ethical role for the state, at the same time that Gentile was vigorously promoting this idea, based on his interpretation of the Hegelian conception of *Sittlichkeit*. Finally, when Gentile published his 'Manifesto of Italian Fascist Intellectuals' (21 April 1925), Croce openly attacked his former friend, responding with his own 'Manifesto of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals' (1 May 1925). There are some interesting exchanges to be found in the private correspondence between the two, but I am more interested in the philosophical ramifications of their debate.

I intend to focus on the theoretical positions that were shared by Gentile and Croce, and the reasons why in the end they followed different political paths. Both were convinced that they had arrived at the correct interpretation of Hegel's philosophy based on their respective readings of his theory of the state as 'the actuality of the ethical idea'.⁵ In a paper presented at the 1931 Berlin Hegel Congress, Gentile explains it as follows: 'According to Hegel [...] the state is not a means, it is not a thing, and yet it embodies that Divine which is the substance of moral life'.⁶

The last work by Gentile, which was entirely dedicated to politics, appears to be fundamental to an understanding of the philosophical grounds of his Hegelianism. The crucial question concerns the origins of society, and Gentile bases his response on the notion of the concrete individual that Hegel elucidated through his concept of the 'ethical whole' (*sittliches Ganze*).⁷ In his 1931 paper, Gentile cites this Hegelian theory, elaborating on it and finally introducing the concept of the 'ethical state' in a form, however, that was never envisaged by Hegel. Where should the ethical characterization of the state come from? Ascribing perhaps undue weight to the idea expressed in a famous paragraph of the *Philosophy of Right*,⁸ Gentile re-interprets the ethical idea as 'substantial will' that opposes two antagonistic concepts of society – the 'aggregative', according to which society is nothing but the sum of individuals, and the substantive, according to which it is something more. Such an opposition had been used by the modern contractarian theory of natural law, and Gentile broadly implements it in his last work *Genesis and Structure of Society* (1946),⁹ seeing the origins of both the liberal and the democratic traditions in the aggregative notion of society.¹⁰

Criticizing the aggregative idea of society on philosophical grounds, Gentile on the one hand dismisses the concept of individuality springing from the objectivism of Antiquity, as stated in the Aristotelian theory of individuals, of which modern contractarianism, which also starts

from the assumption of separate individuals, appears to be a direct descendant. At the same time, he advocates a modern subjectivism, namely the idealism of modern metaphysics, which posits the equivalence of being and thought in individual subjectivity. Accordingly, true reality is grounded in ideality, that is, in 'spiritual substance', as Gentile writes.

The unity of everything is finite, and therefore it cannot be understood, if not in its relations with other units.¹¹

Thus, man himself is the true unity and society may be identified with the individual himself. Nonetheless, the social constitution of man – his nature as *zoon politicon* – implies the transcendence of his singleness and its merging into the society as a whole. This is what Gentile refers to as the 'substantial unity' of human coexistence,¹² precisely echoing Hegel's terminology (*substantial* will – *substantive* freedom, and so on¹³). If the unity of mankind was understood as an aggregative entity that was not open to 'transcendence' within the ethical community, one would limit one-self to the perspective of Hegel's civil society, which in Gentile's words takes the form of a 'political and social atomism' that extols substantial unity over contingency, thus eliminating its own significance. According to Gentile, such a perspective remains a mere 'materialism',¹⁴ that will, in the end, destroy the very value of humanity it seeks to defend.

The sources of politics

As is easily understood, this position offers a direct criticism of the theory of freedom espoused by liberals, who 'claim in the name of morality that the particular individual men must be recognized as free or as substantially independent of the social aggregation'.¹⁵ Gentile claims that such an idea of liberty in the end resolves the concept of society to a 'mechanical aggregate of unrelated units', in which the individual appears to be 'so conditioned and determined; he cannot possess the liberty which is attributed to him in words but denied him on fact'.¹⁶ Such an individual accordingly remains no more than a fictional form (*fictio imaginationis*).

Gentile's argument thus appeared to be quite radical, and diametrically opposed to the liberal theory that was being revived by his idealist colleague Croce, the very philosopher against whom his pages appear to be directed. In fact, Gentile tended towards a radical

interpretation of Hegel's political theory, because he denied one of the fundamental characteristics of its ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) on which the German thinker placed such great emphasis in his *Philosophy of Right*, that is, the role of the family and of civil society, which create an internal differentiation within the state. Civil society involves the development of the *form* of freedom in external relations, through which ethical life realizes its self-constitution within a system of liberty as the *essence* of the public sphere. This happens by means of the functioning of its own basic elements, which comprise both abstract right (*abstraktes Recht*) and morality (*Moralität*). This process is guided by the institutions of civil society: the legal system (which Hegel discusses in the section on 'The Administration of Justice'¹⁷), the Police and the Corporation.¹⁸

By negating the specific role of Hegel's civil society, Gentile is assuming the position of a severe Hegelian, further radicalizing the viewpoints of his mentor Spaventa and presenting himself politically as a nationalistic thinker. Thus, Gentile's political theory rejects any solution that allows for individual specificity outside the political community. In the end, such an overdetermination of politics characterizes the ethical interpretation of the state or, in Gentile's own words, the 'ethical state'.

Where does such a concept come from? Gentile states that it springs from the notion of a transcendental society, within which all men were originally embodied. This signifies that in the beginning a 'society within men' (*societas in interiore homine*) was present. The 'immanence of society within individuals' is predicated on the dialectical overcoming of the Ego and its transformation into the non-Ego. Thus, society is the production of a dialectical Other (*alter*), which is based on the philosophical concept of the Self as identity of singleness and its *alter* or 'essential socius'.¹⁹ According to Hegel's speculative philosophy, the Self is understood as the identification of Ego and non-Ego, that is, of subject and object, and from this equating of opposites, of identity and diversity, emerges true individuality as a 'whole' (*Ganze*). This dialectical process will ultimately resolve the speculative development into determinations that pertain only to the objective spirit, making politics the fundamental level in the determination of reason in the world, to which even science, religion and universal history can be reduced. The necessary conclusion of Gentile's argument from a political point of view would be to favour a morality internal to the state, without any other principles being admitted in society.

Freedom and power

Gentile's idealistic concept of individuality also implies that every individual is 'in concrete' an entire people.²⁰ The State is the 'universal aspect of the individual'; thus – he claims – it is 'bound to possess the same morality as the individual'.²¹ On these grounds, Gentile defends the necessity of an ethical idea of the state in opposition to the competing – instrumental and mechanical – conception of liberalism, which understands the individual on the theoretical grounds of analytical and nominal metaphysics rather than a synthetic and relational theory of subjectivity.²² Accordingly, the liberal notion of freedom arises in opposition to the power of the state, which is understood as restricting individual freedom.

In contrast, Gentile posits a notion of the state that allows a higher form of liberty to enter into the world, a state that men ought to reformulate in accordance with the language of a 'categorical imperative'²³ that subsumes individual life. This imperative, Gentile argues, cannot be anything other than 'morality'. This is the reason why the substantive ethical nature of the state must be acknowledged, even by those who would emphatically contest it. In fact, Gentile writes, those who 'deny the ethical character of the State' (that is, his liberal opponents) in essence merely 'make haste to restore to it with the left hand what they have taken away with the right'.²⁴ They do not wish to eliminate it, but instead to harness it as a means of achieving their own 'higher ends'.²⁵ All the same – and here lies the crux of Gentile's reply – if you remain tied to the concept of aims and means, that is, to a strictly instrumental notion of reason, you will never understand the essence of morality. Therefore, to avoid an ethical neutralization of political life – which in Gentile's eyes would be worse than immorality, because it would be inhuman²⁶ – the only solution that remains is 'theocracy'.

Statolatry

The only ethical state therefore is a theocracy because it is a 'divine will, whether we consider it simply as an existing authority, or accept its full significance as the concrete actuality of our will'.²⁷ Although he refers to Hegel, Gentile is now playing a new game. As I have already mentioned in the context of some of his statements on Hegelian state theory, Gentile proposes a radical interpretation of the thought expounded by Hegel in 1821, equating the notion of the spirit with the true nature of politics

(that is, statehood), which in its transcendent form is therefore nothing other than an authentic and immanent God who deserved our absolute faith and trust. This total identification of the concept of the spirit with its own objective manifestation, that is, the identification of speculative philosophy with politics, is expressed in the word 'statolatry',²⁸ whose profile does not correspond to anything in Hegel's writings. Nevertheless, according to Gentile people should not fear statolatry because it is based on 'transcendence', namely the actuality of the life of the spirit rather than the immanence of factuality. 'Transcendence' means the form of spirit as *idea*, that is, the unity of Being and non-Being, which remains in Reality, but changes and transforms it.

Croce, Gentile and philosophy

Gentile's stance brought him into direct confrontation with Croce, who made his own case for the specific role of morality in political life, but he instead linked it to the intellectual power of individuals, to their own values and productive activities down through the ages. Hence, according to Croce's interpretation, the morality of politics is separable from the politics of the state, because the latter remains a product of force, power and – ultimately – private interests, which Croce defines in terms of the economic life. This division of the spiritual world is rooted in Croce's theory of distinctions, according to which the life of the spirit needs to be separated into four different spheres, namely logic and aesthetics for theoretical spirit, and ethics and economics for practical spirit. Within politics the two forms of practical life are maintained: ethics (that is, the individual's moral capacities) and economics (which he equates with the reason of state).

Croce's political theory, which was shaped by his personal revision of Hegelianism, takes into account another issue, namely the distinction among concepts, which, in his account, predominates over the aspect of synthetical unity that is so central to Gentile's philosophy and the latter's elaboration of his theory of the ethical state on political grounds.

Croce's critique of Hegelian dialectics, beginning in 1906, focuses on how it could lead to 'the metamorphosis of particular concepts into philosophical errors'.²⁹ In his mind Hegel's methodology, which aims at resolving the problem of 'particular determination', demonstrates the inability of his speculative logic to defend the internal articulation of the concept of spirit in dialectical development.

In other words, Croce criticizes the way in which, for instance, the subjective spirit is overshadowed by the objective spirit, which in turn is overshadowed by the absolute spirit and so on, as is also then the case with the forms of absolute spirit (such as the arts, religion and philosophy). The second relevant point in Croce's critique is the one previously mentioned, regarding the fallacy in Hegel's theory of the subject/object relationship that Croce sees as stemming from the fact that Hegel maintains both the essentialist and relational definitions of substance (that is, the notion of *Substanz-Subjekt*). Croce, in contrast, denies the nominal (that is, analytical) character of substance, maintaining its relational (synthetical) aspect alone, and finally resolves the idea of subjectivity into its predicates, re-interpreting individuality in a purely historical sense.³⁰ As a consequence of this reform of Hegel's logic, Croce negates the existence of an absolute spirit, because he sees it as it was an extra-historical dimension of universality that merely constitutes the theological side of Hegel's philosophy. On the contrary, Croce insists that the spirit always takes on historical forms that are consistent with the internal distinctions between the spheres of logics, aesthetics, ethics and economics.

In conclusion, Croce identifies philosophy with historiography, specifically with the philosophical meaning of history. His dispute with Gentile comes to a head on this topic, because Croce denies the very thesis of actualism, namely the idea that the actualization of the spirit within reality ought to maintain politics as its ultimate sphere. Arguing for the necessary presence of distinctions, Croce nonetheless introduced not only the notion of the independence of spiritual forms as promoted the theory of distinctions, but also the idea of their hierarchical ordering, particularly in the case of the practical spirit, within which economics must yield to morality. Furthermore, according to Croce, ethics remains in the realm of universal concept, whereas economics (and politics as a part of the economic sphere) passes into the realm of particular concept, because it is merely an instrumental rationality.

Croce, Gentile and the state

What about Croce and the state? According to Croce the state provides a case study in the language of philosophy and economics, because it remains a strategically oriented decision maker, whose monopolistic and coercive power is ultimately directed at the regulation of human needs. This is why in the international arena the state acts like a self-interested

economic entity. Here, Croce takes up a fundamental point that also emerges in Hegel's theory of international law.³¹

When the dispute with Gentile erupts in 1924, Croce outlines his idea of the state in *Elements of Politics* (1925), a series of short essays (which were later re-published in the collection *Politics and Morals*),³² whose basic intention was to underscore his divergence from Hegel's political philosophy as embodied in the latter's theory of *Sittlichkeit*. While he does present an analytical discussion of Hegel's ideas, the true target of his critique is Gentile's radical interpretation of them. In one of his essays, Croce shows how his own liberal conception of the state appears to contrast with the Hegelian 'real whole' (*wirkliche Totalität*), underlining that his theory deals directly with Hegel's idea of 'civil society' (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*). As is well known, according to Hegel civil society represents the moment of 'appearance' (*Erscheinung*) of ethical life, that is, the framework from which the immediate ethical substance is developed in the 'form of universality' (*Form der Allgemeinheit*).³³ Therefore, among the fundamental configurations of civil society are formal law, as well as the needs of the citizens and the satisfaction of those needs.³⁴ In addition, a certain degree of rational organization of communitarian life can be found in the domain of civil society, for example the police and the corporation.³⁵ However, as Hegel emphasizes, civil society is not yet a fully developed ethical entity, or the truth of *ethos* (*Sittlichkeit*). In fact, within civil society reflection (*Reflexion*) rather than the absolute rationality of the whole, or the *idea*, prevails.

Nevertheless, by equating the state with civil society Croce takes an important step towards the reconciliation of political Hegelianism with the central thesis of modern political theory – the defence of the constitutional state. On the other hand, Croce's liberal re-reading of Hegel offers a re-alignment of political philosophy, in which the primacy of Church over State (as it had been defended by Christian political theory) is asserted. And yet, within Croce's secularized interpretation, the Church is identified with the principle of freedom in opposition to that of the State and of power. Freedom, moreover, is the principle of historical life in which the 'universal spirit' is present, overcoming the particular moment of politics and the state.

Within this opposition between the particular and the universal in practical life, as a moment of 'volition of the universal', morality surpasses politics; the latter being the 'volition of the individual or particular' and so belongs to the sphere of utility. Therefore, Croce finally states:

What we have called political life and State in the narrow or true sense of the [word] corresponds more or less to what Hegel called 'civil society' (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*). It included not only the economic activity of men, the production and exchange of goods and services, but also the law and administration or government by laws.

[...]

But Hegel did not realize that the State, understood in the narrow sense, is precisely the formation which he had encountered and christened a mere 'civil society'.³⁶

When in 1931 Croce reiterates this thesis in the new edition of his work, he inveighs against the 'present diffusion in Italy of an equivocal statolatry'³⁷. It is important to recall that this debate was unfolding in the 1930s, against the backdrop of a Fascist regime and an ideology whose enforced consensus was reaching its apex.

Harshly criticizing Gentile's concept of the ethical state, Croce categorically rejects the thesis that lays at the heart of Gentile's political philosophy, namely the equating of fundamental moral claims with the state. Croce calls this idea 'a "governmental" concept of morality', which could be excused in the case of Hegel who, in his quarrel with the notion of the 'beautiful souls', used it as an antidote against 'romantic inclinations, vagueness and presumptuousness'.³⁸ In order to defend against this 'Dionysiacal [*sic*] delirium for the State or government', Croce declares that this latter should be seen as 'it really is', namely:

An elementary and narrow form of practical life, from every part of which the moral life comes forth and overflows, spreading out in abundant, productive streams; so productive as to make and remake perpetually political life itself and the States, that is to compel them to renew themselves in conformity with the needs which political life creates.³⁹

The character of Italian Hegelianism

The dispute between these two champions of Italian neo-idealism absorbed not only the political, but also the philosophical heritage of Italian Hegelianism. In fact, they formulated diametrically opposed versions of Hegelianism: on the one hand Gentile's secularized 'actualism' and on the other Croce's 'absolute historicism', which was bound to the pluralism of cultural forms through which the complete work of the spirit in history could be actualized. Nevertheless, what Croce

envisaged was a well-ordered pluralism, by which means the universal configuration of the practical spirit could prevail over the particular dimension of self-interested individuals. Yet Croce's thought was in the end characterized by his own idea of the contamination of politics by competing ethical perspectives, in which ethics and politics are equated in a complex relationship that embraces both similarities and differences.⁴⁰ To support this thesis, he reformulated the relationship between state and religion proposed by Leopold v. Ranke, who claimed that universal history remains a 'history of the struggle and relations between Church and State'.⁴¹

What were the foundations of Croce's thesis? Underlying his analogy between church and state was the abiding primacy of the individual conscience (*Gewissen*), in much the same way as that outlined by Pope Pius XI (1922–1939), who wrote an encyclical on Christian education that emphasized the identity between civil society and the state.⁴² Therefore, in essence moral conscience defends 'universal volition' against the 'particular willing', which, according to Croce, the volition of the political community always remains.

This story highlights a fundamental characteristic of the history of Italian philosophy: that its Hegelianism has always been bound up with two very different claims. On the one side, there is the Neapolitan school, a legacy that has passed from Spaventa through Angelo Camillo De Meis (1817–1891), Francesco Fiorentino (1834–1884) and Donato Jaia to Gentile and that places primacy on the political community, leading to the natural, albeit very specific (given the historical circumstances) conclusion of the theory of the ethical state. This falls within the Italian tradition of civil philosophy, which from Machiavelli (1469–1527) to the present day has characterized the nation's philosophical stance.

On the other hand, Croce sought to shift the political path toward the 'infinite' value of the individual,⁴³ who represents the individual as opposed to false individualities such as the nation state, which remain merely an 'external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it'.⁴⁴ And yet this was also Hegel's position when he defended the worth of subjective conscience, claiming it to be a 'sanctuary' that would be sacrilegious to violate.⁴⁵ Here morality (*Moralität*) presents its genuine form, namely the principle of subjectivity that gives meaning to the whole development of the modern world, which fundamentally remains a spiritual world. Thus, to use Hegel's own words in the *Philosophy of Right*, which Croce must have had in mind when he wrote his essays on politics and morals, it can be affirmed that

Conscience is the expression of the absolute title of subjective self-consciousness to know in itself and from within itself what is right and obligatory ...⁴⁶

While it is certain that here Hegel was defending 'true conscience' (*wahrhaftes Gewissen*),⁴⁷ on which the concept of ethical life turns, he nonetheless emphasized the role of the individual morality in the history of ethical principle. The true conscience is able to understand universality of the ethical world, renouncing its particular and incidental form, to which the notion of the 'evil conscience' refers.⁴⁸

Croce was one of the first philosophers to understand the conflicting nature of Hegel's ethical theory, which becomes particularly visible in the contrast between 'evil' and 'true' conscience. He sought to explain it by citing the philosopher's 'personal conservatism' and 'his loyalty to the Prussian State of the restoration',⁴⁹ which instead ought to have drawn him toward the concept of state's ethical life (*Staatssittlichkeit*). And yet the essence of Hegel's thought should not be reduced to this concept (which Gentile also focused on); we should instead turn to the Hegel of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (of which Croce published a brilliant translation in 1907), which laid out in complete development his system based on the absolute forms of the universal spirit. In his revision of Hegelianism – as previously noted – Croce transformed these into the concept of historical individuality; in them, in the history of the spirit, free subjectivity is born as moral conscience.⁵⁰ According to Croce this was the original path introduced by Hegel in the history of philosophy, and his fundamental contribution to cultural history.

If a place must be found in the history of the nation of Italy for this philosophical chapter, it must be concluded that Giovanni Gentile, and not Benedetto Croce, was the true follower of *Italian* Hegelianism, because his idea of philosophy binds together politics and knowledge, reflecting the main principles of the Italian Risorgimento. In other words, Gentile elaborated on the political vocation that originally emerged from the treatment of Hegel by early contemporary philosophy in Italy.

However, it was Benedetto Croce who arrived at the understanding that Hegelianism could be effectively used to address the supranational sphere, rather than the domestic and national sphere exalted by political romanticism. It may be said that the soul of European culture survived in his critical re-interpretation of Hegel's philosophy in a very particular, 'cosmopolitan' light.

Notes

To Professor Claudio Cesa, on the occasion of his 85th birthday.

1. In a quite similar manner to the case of Russia – cf. Harris (this volume) – in 19th century Italian Hegelianism increasingly promoted both national independence and liberal reforms.
2. Croce (1915) and Gentile (1981).
3. Sasso (1975), 897ff.
4. In 1924 Arthur Livingston provided an English translation of the book under the title *The Conduct of Life*. Cf. Croce (1924).
5. PR (K) §257.
6. Own translation. Later in Gentile (2003), 113.
7. Hoffmeister (1994), 111. Cf. PR §142, §257, §262.
8. PR §258.
9. English translation by H. S. Harris. Cf. Gentile (1966).
10. Gentile (1966), 180.
11. *Ibid.*, 79.
12. *Ibid.*, 80.
13. PR §257, 258.
14. Gentile (1966), 80.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Gentile (1966), 81.
17. PR §§209ff.
18. PR §§250ff.
19. Gentile (1966), 98.
20. *Ibid.*, 130.
21. *Ibid.*, 131.
22. *Ibid.*, 78.
23. *Ibid.*, 131.
24. Gentile (1966), 131.
25. *Ibid.*, 132.
26. *Ibid.*, 133.
27. *Ibid.*, 132.
28. My translation. According to Harris, ‘state worship’: see Gentile (1966), 167.
29. Croce (1915), 120.
30. Cf. Scaravelli (1968), 92–95. See also Collingwood (1946), 194–195. A discussion of Collingwood’s historical theory as well as his peculiar Hegelianism is provided by Browning (this volume).
31. PR §332.
32. 1st Italian edition (1931). Partially translated in English by S. J. Castiglione. Cf. Croce (1945).
33. PR §186.
34. PR §185.
35. PR §§230ff.
36. Croce (1945), 73–74.
37. My translation. Castiglione translated this term as ‘idolatry of the State’: see Croce (1945), 77.
38. *Ibid.*, 31. On the notion of the ‘beautiful soul’ and its reception in tsarist Russia see Shkolnikov (this volume).
39. *Ibid.*

40. A discussion of the issue can be found in Sasso (1975), 467ff.
41. Croce (1945), 183.
42. *Divini illius magistri* (31 December 1929).
43. PR §124, §137.
44. PR §183.
45. PR §137.
46. PR §137.
47. PR §137.
48. PR §139.
49. Croce (1945), 31. On the notion of ‘conscience’ in the context of Russian Hegelianism see also Harris (this volume).
50. *Ibid.*, 76–77.

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13

The Hegelian Legacy in Kojève and Sartre

Gilles Marmasse

Introduction

French academic philosophy, from the mid-1930s until the end of the 1950s, was dominated by at least four German philosophers: Hegel, Marx, Husserl and Heidegger. In some ways, the originality of the French philosophy of this period lay in its way of associating these entirely dissimilar thinkers. In reality, however, Hegel's ascendancy in France was short-lived, particularly because it was associated with the phenomenological-existential thinking which developed in Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905–1980) wake – a current of thought that was violently attacked from the 1960s onwards, particularly by structuralism. Still, an assertion by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) in 1946 expresses Hegelianism's success in France from the 1930s to the 1950s: 'For a century, Hegel has been at the origin of everything great which has been achieved in philosophy'.¹

The rebirth of Hegelianism in France is tied to Alexandre Kojève's (1902–1968) commentary on *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. This commentary is the product of the seminar led by Kojève at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes from 1933 to 1939, which was attended by the cream of Parisian intellectual life, including Raymond Aron (1905–1983), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) and Georges Bataille (1897–1961). Kojève did not publish the text of his seminar himself, but left it in the hands of Raymond Queneau (1903–1976), who had it brought out in 1947 under the title of *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. As Kojève himself recognized, the interpretation was not intended to be philologically rigorous, and is as much a reinvention of Hegelianism as an introduction to Hegel's texts. Nonetheless, through its force and its allure, it left a lasting mark on the shape of Hegelian philosophy in France.

The relationship between Sartre and Hegel is more difficult to establish, as Sartre cites Hegel only infrequently. Nonetheless, an attentive reading reveals that Sartre uses a number of Hegelian themes in his own work. The question is, by whom was Sartre's reading of Hegel influenced? Kojève cannot have been his only source, for, aside from his personal interpretation, we find a reading influenced by other German and French authors – for instance, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and Jean Wahl (1888–1974). At the same time, bearing in mind the enormous success of Kojève at the time, it is reasonable to think that the Kojévian interpretation at least partially influenced Sartre.

The aim of this chapter is to show the family resemblances between the two interpretations. First, I attempt to show that the two authors both turn Hegelianism into an anthropology, and an anthropology which tends to deal with the genesis of self-consciousness and to thereby explain the coming into existence of man as such. I then attempt to show that by setting out from this reading of Hegel the two authors accord a decisive role to man's finitude, which, for them, expresses itself as much in the essential shortcomings of all consciousness as in the insoluble nature of human conflict.

The theme of conflict in Kojève and Sartre

First, let us look at how Kojève (1902–1968), and then Sartre, place conflict in the centre of their analyses and, from this point of view, can claim to be the heirs of Hegel.

For Kojève, as he reads Hegel, what is at stake in the master-slave dialectic is man's becoming human through his attainment of self-consciousness. The passage from the simple consciousness of objects to self-consciousness allows man to leave behind his animal state and to enter into humanity. This humanization, Kojève says, does not occur in solitude, but in intersubjectivity. The master-slave dialectic is, therefore, not only the key to self-consciousness, but also to society². However, the striking part of this theory of humanization and of socialization is that it happens through struggle, a struggle by which man, in his relations with Others, seeks to impose himself as the Other's master, and thus to enslave him.

Why, one could ask, make this struggle the key to humanity's genesis? For Kojève, as he reads Hegel, the condition of self-consciousness is nothing other than desire. In effect, the desiring I has the same nature as that which it desires³. Thus, if it desires something natural as a mere object for pleasure, the I will remain natural and animal. If, on the

other hand, the desire takes as its object another consciousness, another desire, the I goes beyond its natural state. To desire a desire, Kojève says, is to wish to subjugate another's consciousness, to impose oneself on it as a supreme value.⁴ Here, then, the struggle does not, in a Hobbesian manner, follow from competition for access to scarce goods, but rather from the effort to impose on the Other a subjection which they refuse.

Then, the struggle has two stages. The first leads from animality to the victory of one of the combatants, and the second is the fate of each protagonist after the fight.

Let us consider the first stage, the combat itself. According to Kojève, its outcome in his reading of Hegel is not decided by the two combatants' differing strength, their intelligence, or the circumstances, but rather by the acceptance by one of them of the risk of death. The victor is not truly stronger, but is indifferent enough to life to put it at stake. In the same way, the loser is not the weaker of the two, but the one who is too attached to life to risk it in an authentic way. Two things are therefore at stake in the fight: firstly, the subjugation of one combatant by another; secondly, and more fundamentally, the transformation by each of their own desire which comes from the sacrifice of the animal dimension. There is not only a struggle against the Other, but a struggle against oneself, for the individual's desire for his humanity must win out over his desire for self-preservation. For Kojève, man only reveals himself as human if he risks his (animal) life through his (human) desire. Thus, putting one's own life at stake is not simply a means of winning the struggle. As the realization of a certain relationship with oneself and with the world, this putting one's life at stake is the deepest meaning of the struggle. Significantly, Kojève talks about a 'fight to the death for pure prestige'.⁵ 'Prestige' here does not refer to the priority of appearance over being, but to the priority of meaning over strength. What is at stake is not to be the strongest, but to have the most human relationship to oneself and to Others. The hermeneutic aspect of this struggle is therefore essential, and the fight is delimited by the definition of two roles, of two identities. The victor in the fight, who becomes the master, is the one who agrees to risk his or her life, whereas the loser, who becomes a slave, is the one who is afraid of death.

How to describe the second stage of the master-slave dialectic, the fate of each protagonist? It is characterized by a number of paradoxical features. First, there is a fundamental failure on the part of the master. In effect, the master realizes that the desire of the Other whom he has conquered is not a truly human desire, as the slave, by definition, remains attached to life. The master's target reveals itself to be something

other than what was aimed at. There follows a fundamental victory for the servant. In effect, in the fear that he felt when faced with death, he has become aware of the vanity of all fixed states of affairs. The slave did not wish to be the master, and no longer wishes to be the slave. He refuses all solidarity with a world that he knows is hostile to him. Rather, he wants to be autonomous, and to transform the world: in a word, he has a revolutionary consciousness. Moreover, through his work, he comes to actively transform the world. As a worker, and potentially as a revolutionary, he brings about the negation of what denies him. Finally, the slave who was afraid of death and remained attached to his natural desire is required to abandon his individual desire and thus to open himself up to a universal desire. Which is why, from Kojève's point of view, only the slave is a truly universal man in the sense that he is not enclosed in his particular situation but embodies humanity as a whole.

What are the key features of this theory? (1) We should first note how deceptively attractive the text is. At once formal and concrete, it seems to analyse the raw centre of human existence, and to do so with perfect argumentative rigour. In a certain fashion, both its simplicity and its extraordinary dogmatism make it seductive. This explains the lasting fascination that, in spite of its actual theoretical weaknesses, it has exerted on the French-speaking philosophical world. (2) Moreover, as has been noted, one of the distinctive features of this interpretation was the relevance it brought to Hegel, by projecting onto him themes whose legitimacy was growing – that is, the Marxist theme of struggle, and the Heideggerian theme of self-interpretation as the key to human existence. (3) Next, Kojève places a novel insistence on the impossibility of real understanding between human beings. This is not simply because we start out from the attempt to subjugate the Other, but also because the point of arrival only reinforces the mutual hostility of the protagonists.⁶ Of course, the possibility of a revolution may suggest a solution – but this is deferred to an indefinite point in the future. (4) Let us note, too, that Kojève is adopting the perspective of social contract thinkers, like Hobbes and Spinoza, for whom society grows up from a state of nature. For Kojève, as for his predecessors, it is nature which, somehow, makes up the origin and the explanation of the passage to authentic humanity. (5) Finally, for Kojève, humanization is not characterized only by a real causality, but also by an ideal causality, by a hermeneutic. Everything takes place, in effect, in the relationship which a human being has with himself (as being attached to life, or not) and in his manner of appearing to the Other (whether as a thing, or as a human being).

Now, to what extent and within what limits can we call this analysis Hegelian? To begin, there is, clearly, the reference to Hegel's text on domination and servitude – even if this text, which, for Hegel, deals with only one moment among several, is read by Kojève as giving an account of the whole fate of consciousness. Second, there is the insistence on conflict and contradiction – even if Kojève abstains from talking about reconciliation. Third, there is the emphasis on transformation, on the fact that the truth is only a result – even if, in this particular case, Kojève remains fixed on a single figure, and ignores both those which precede the master-slave dialectic and those which follow it. There is also the value given to the notions of consciousness and self-consciousness – even if Kojève pays no attention to that of spirit. Finally, there is the affirmation that the Other plays a constitutive role in the development of consciousness – even if Kojève overlooks the fact that, for Hegel, other experiences than that of the Other occur in the development of consciousness.

Having considered Kojève's Hegelian heritage from the point of view of conflict, let us examine how far Sartre deals with this theme. Sartre intends to struggle against what he considers the abstract nature of traditional philosophy. In line with Hegelianism, he wants to build a 'concrete philosophy' which could describe the fullness of lived reality (even if, unlike Hegel, Sartre holds that there is no possible reconciliation between the subject and the world). However, in his view, what a subject spontaneously lives or feels is neither the isolated interiority nor the exterior things as things in themselves. On one side, it is man who gives a sense to the world, on the other side, he experiences himself only in the world, as an acting subject. According to Sartre, the Other plays then an essential role in the self-consciousness of the subject, because the subject does not know himself directly but only through the look of the Other.

For Sartre, the Other reveals to me what I objectively am. The Other is crucial for my self-consciousness and so for my humanity: 'It would perhaps not be impossible to conceive of a For-itself which would be wholly free from all For-others [...] But this For-itself simply would not be a "man"'.⁷ However, I am not the master of what the Other sees me as. The Other, insofar as it produces the consciousness that I have of myself, renders me powerless concerning this self-consciousness. This is why the relationship with the Other is essentially characterized by struggle: 'Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others'.⁸ The relationship with the Other is at once constitutive and alienating.

In effect, in Sartre's view, consciousness, as far as it is pure openness to the world, is unreflected. It does not appear to itself as a self and has no positive content, but is absorbed in its object. It is only in encountering the Other that a 'self' arises which is distinct from the object. At the same time, to the extent that my 'self' is produced by the Other, I have no power over it. One striking example proposed by Sartre is of the shame that comes over me when I am caught looking through a keyhole.⁹ I then experience the fact that the Other imposes on me the identity of a voyeur, and I cannot refuse this identity, as I only see myself through the eyes of the Other. Of course, I do not become an object, and I am not transformed into a thing: but I have certainly to undergo being seen as an object – which I cannot bear. This is why, Sartre says, 'my original fall is the existence of the Other'.¹⁰

Another notable example is the relationship between lovers. For Sartre, love is an attempt to respond to the alienation associated with the relationship with the Other. In love, Sartre says, I aspire to determine my consciousness of myself autonomously by controlling the Other's gaze. I do this by seducing the Other. It is not a matter of not appearing to the Other as an object – which would be impossible – but of making myself the object that the Other will accept to lose his or her freedom in: 'Each one of the lovers wants to be the object for which the Other's freedom is alienated'.¹¹ Here, Sartre says, we find an inherent contradiction. In effect, each person wants the Other to love him – that is, to relate to him or her as a loving subject relates to a seductive object. If, by chance, the Other loves me, he or she inevitably tries to get me to love him or her, and so relate to me, not as a loving subject, but in his turn as a seductive object. Put in other terms: when I love, I tend to make myself a seductive object, and to make the Other into a loving subject. But the success of this attempt transforms the Other in a manner contrary to my expectations. In effect, I want the Other to be seduced and, against my wishes, he or she is transformed into the seducer. When he or she loves me, the Other tends to make me into an enslaved subject – whereas I want to be a dominating object. Conversely, when I love, I tend to make the Other into an enslaved subject, whereas the Other wants in itself to be a dominating object.

What are the Hegelian or Kojévian aspects of this analysis? First, for Sartre, as in Kojève's reading of Hegel, access to self-consciousness is the result of the relationship between two individuals, and intersubjectivity is the key to humanization. Second, for Sartre as well as for Kojève, humanity is not a starting point, but a result, the effect of a process. Third, Sartre, like Kojève, refuses any dualism between mind

and body. Fourth, for both authors, the relationship with the Other is not theoretical, but practical and existential, in the sense that it requires me to act and determines the meaning which I give to myself and to the world. Moreover, for Sartre as for Kojève, this process is a struggle, in the sense that each subject tends to impose on the other a determination which the latter refuses. Also, Sartre, like Kojève, does not take a moral point of view here, and gives no prescriptions insofar as he sees the conflict of individuals as inevitable. Finally, for both authors, the dialectic does not end in reconciliation, but rather brings about alienation.

It is notable that Sartre himself recognized parallels with Hegel, while also recognizing their limits.

Up to this point our description would fall into line with Hegel's famous description of the Master and Slave relation. What the Hegelian Master is for the Slave, the lover wants to be for the beloved. But the analogy stops here, for with Hegel the Master demands the Slave's freedom only laterally and, so to speak, implicitly, while the lover wants the beloved's freedom *first and foremost*. In this sense if I am to be loved by the Other, this means that I am to be freely chosen as beloved.¹²

One could challenge Sartre on the limits of the analogy, and charge him with being more Hegelian than he says – or, at least, more Kojévian. In effect, in Kojève's interpretation, the freedom – the self-consciousness particular to human beings – of the slave is central. It is precisely because the slave is not an authentically human self-consciousness that the master is deceived, and we may call his own experience a failure. All told, therefore, there is a remarkable affinity between Kojève's account of the master-slave dialectic and Sartre's account of the conflict of individuals.

Finitude

Let us now consider the question of finitude. How far can we find here both Hegel's legacy and a measure of similarity between Kojève and Sartre?

We first examine the question of death in Kojève. For him, Hegelianism is a philosophy that brings death to the fore. For it is in accepting the risk of death, that the individual gains his humanity. In the same way, history would have no meaning, and would not even be possible, if man were not mortal. Moreover, Kojève claims, through his insistence on the

absurdity of the idea of immortality, Hegelianism was history's first great atheistic philosophy.

What do we gain from death? Firstly, Kojève says, death allows us to escape our destiny. If man lived eternally and could not die, he would not be able to escape from the omnipotence of God. On the contrary, if he can bring about his own death, he can refuse any imposed destiny, because in ceasing to exist he ceases to be subject to this destiny. Suicide, voluntary death, is the clearest manifestation of human liberty: 'It is only because of the essential finitude of man and history that the latter is anything other than a tragedy [...] acted out by human players for the entertainment of the gods, who are its authors, who therefore know how it will end, and who, as a consequence, cannot take it seriously'.¹³

Secondly, death allows a transformation of the self. Kojève insists firmly on freedom as the negation of the given – a negation of what one is oneself (as an animal, or as dependent on a tradition) as well as what one is not (that is, the natural or social world).¹⁴ Of course, death is by definition the end of all things, but the anguish we feel when faced with death, as well as the acceptance of the risk of death, bring about a self-transformation which is a self-creation¹⁵. This is why 'man only is and only exists insofar as he suppresses himself dialectically—that is, by conserving and subliming himself'.¹⁶ Finally, for Kojève, it is the acceptance of death which makes man a wise and universal being: 'Absolute knowledge or wisdom in the Hegelian sense, and conscious acceptance of death, understood as complete nihilation, are one and the same'.¹⁷ Finally, finitude is not a shortcoming, but the key to man's humanization.

Next, how should we analyse finitude as it occurs in Sartre's writing? Here, too, the question of finitude and of negativity is brought to the fore. First, Sartre reinterprets Husserlian phenomenology using the Hegelian categories of the In-itself and the For-itself. For him, the opposition of consciousness and the world is an opposition between a For-itself and an In-itself – that is, between a nothingness and a full being, between something free which is its own author, and something given which is always identical with itself. Sartre also draws on the Hegelian idea of negativity. The self, he says, is a 'nothingness' which 'nihilates' its object. In effect, on the one hand, consciousness is a nothingness in the sense that it has no content, that it is not even a transcendental self, but only a movement towards what is outside of itself. On the other hand, consciousness has the power to nihilate being – not only in the sense that it destroys being, but in the sense that it forces it aside. Nihilation consists of 'bracketing off' every particular entity, and thereby to bracketing oneself off in relation to it. To nihilate is to retreat, to distance

oneself radically, in the way that Descartes asserted his capacity to doubt everything, even what is evident – a doubt which, Sartre claims, prefigures Hegelian negativity¹⁸. The subject is thereby not determined by anything which *is*, and, notably, not by itself, by its character, by its social situation, its past, and so on: 'To be, for the For-itself, is to nihilate the In-itself which it is. In these conditions, freedom can be nothing other than this nihilation. It is through this nihilation that the For-itself is always something other than what one can say of it'.¹⁹ This is why man is always something other than what he is.

Secondly, Sartre no longer thinks of the relationship of man to the world in terms of knowledge, that is, in terms of the theoretical construction of objectivity, but rather does so in terms of existence. The fundamental relationship of man to the world is one of being, by which man chooses the meaning he gives to his world. Existence, for Sartre, responds to a desire²⁰, and this desire expresses the lack of that fullness and stability which is precisely characteristic of the In-itself: 'This perpetually absent being which haunts the For-itself is its own self, frozen into an In-itself. In the impossible synthesis of the For-itself and the In-itself, it would be its own foundation, not as a nothingness, but as a being, and would hold in itself the necessary transparency of consciousness, at the same time as the coincidence of being with itself'.²¹ Man is characterized by emptiness, and wants fullness. Human existence may be analysed from the starting point of a subjectively felt shortcoming and the desire to surpass it. Human existence is characterized by the search, always in vain, for the In-itself-for-itself. The For-itself is not the foundation of its being, but only of its nothingness, and man's undertaking aims on the other hand to reappropriate for itself this factual being, and so to give a foundation for the In-itself. There exists here an obvious affinity with Kojève, who defines desire as a nothingness, a void.²² Furthermore, we can see, in the striving of the For-itself towards fullness, an inheritance of the Hegelian idea of self-development and of concretization springing from the dissatisfaction linked to the initial abstraction. For Sartre, consciousness first of all arises, and only later defines itself. Here we come across the Hegelian idea of the passage from being to concept, which is, further, that from immediacy to self-founded subjectivity.

Finally, there is in Sartre a powerful call for atheism, insofar as, for him, man is the being who strives to be God, which excludes the existence of God.²³ Now, whether right or wrong, Kojève makes Hegel the first atheist philosophy in history, arguing, like Sartre, that the absence of God is the condition of man's freedom.²⁴

Conclusion

To conclude, in both Kojève and Sartre we see a refusal of metaphysical analysis in favour of pragmatic and hermeneutical analyses. There is no given human nature, but rather, self-consciousness produces itself; in the same way, each individual produces his or her own humanity. Not only is God in fact absent, it is *necessary* that he is absent. In effect, according to Kojève, freedom is only possible through the renunciation of all immortality, and, according to Sartre, man is only free if no God imposes on him a 'nature' *a priori*. For the two authors, in the same way that the limits of consciousness are not boundaries that make consciousness impossible, but rather the conditions of all knowledge, the finitude of existence is the jumping-off point for freedom. Finally, it is the Hegelian idea of negativity which leaves the strongest mark on Kojève and Sartre – negativity understood as the activity of negating the given, as the power to escape from everything which is, and thereby to be the autonomous author of all knowledge and of all action. We are right to doubt how faithful this interpretation is to Hegel's texts, but it is certain that, in this very unfaithfulness, there is an authentic philosophical undertaking, and that this undertaking can still inspire our thinking today.

Notes

1. Merleau-Ponty (1996), 79.
2. See Kojève (1947), 13.
3. See Kojève (1947), 13.
4. See Kojève (1947), 14.
5. Kojève (1947), 516.
6. See Kojève (1947), 15.
7. Sartre (1976), 322; Sartre (2003), 306.
8. Sartre (1976), 404; Sartre (2003), 386.
9. See Sartre (1976), 298.
10. See Sartre (1976), 265.
11. Sartre (1976), 416; Sartre (2003), 398.
12. See Sartre (1976), 410; Sartre (2003), 392.
13. Kojève (1947), 520.
14. See Kojève (1947), 492.
15. Kojève (1947), 547.
16. Kojève (1947), 510.
17. Kojève (1947), 538.
18. See Sartre (1976), 59. See also Sartre (1947), 327.
19. See Sartre (1976), 494.
20. See Sartre (1976), 281.

21. See Sartre (1976), 133; Sartre (2003), 117; quoted by R. Barbaras (2005), 127.
22. Kojève (1947), 12.
23. See Sartre (1976), 126.
24. Kojève (1947), 536.

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14

The Event of a Reading: Hegel 'with' Derrida

Joseph Cohen

Introduction

To question Hegel is always to acquiesce, reaffirm and reiterate Hegel. The question addressed to Hegel, the critical position stipulated against Hegel already justifies Hegel's very system of philosophy which defines itself by the central affirmation we can read in the *Preface* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: 'The power of Spirit is only as great as its expression, its depth only as deep as it dares to spread out and lose itself in its exposition'.¹ There is thus never for Hegel an obscure, hidden and transcendent meaning which is not already and always engaged in the process of its own revelation. In this sense, Hegel's system of philosophy grasps and seizes the totality of all that is present by marking that all is always and already revealed in presence. Which means that the totality of meaning reveals itself wholly and entirely through the different moments of its development and deployment. Or again, differences are the modalities by which the unity and identity of meaning reveals itself in and as history. Hence, the capital problem we *all* encounter in reading Hegel is the problem of the 'beginning': where does one begin thinking meaning when meaning itself has already and always engaged itself in its own deployment by which every singular moment from which one can think is the expression of the totality of meaning? Or again, how does one *enter* into a philosophy when this very philosophy reveals the movement by which is expressed the recognition that one is already and always deploying itself within the revealed entirety of meaning?²

It is by addressing this problem which looms over the question '*how to come out of Hegel?*' That is, how to escape the identifying totality of Spirit understood as the absolute development of meaning as 'identity of identity and difference', and thus as reduction of all otherness and difference

to a comprehensive sameness and identification – that an entire generation of French philosophers, from Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) to Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), *entered* into Hegel's philosophy. This generation is often seen as *anti-hegelian* and resolutely opposed to any elaboration of a *system* in philosophical thinking. Often, post-Second World War French philosophy has been characterized by a profound engagement *against* Hegelian speculative dialectics and thus by a critical opposition to any possible construction of a philosophical system. In the name of an irreducible Otherness, post-Second World War French philosophy affirmed thus a resistance to Hegel's philosophical system, a resistance to any structure whereby identity and difference reconcile each other in the essence of a comprehensive totality whereby both identity and difference are thought through their difference as already and always identifiable. This opposition was referenced and succinctly interpreted by Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) in *Positions*³, where the French philosopher recounts the genealogy of the question '*how to come out of Hegel?*' in post-Second World War French philosophy. Through the discussions and interviews which compose this publication, Derrida marks how and why contemporary French philosophy, despite the profound Hegelian influence it underwent since Alexandre Kojève's reading and Jean Hyppolite's translation, and exhaustive commentary of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*,⁴ defined itself as a resolute denegation of Hegelian metaphysics. The hypothesis, however, which I would like to put forth, is that 'deconstruction' does not seek to *come out of* Hegel, nor oppose or resist Hegelian metaphysics, but rather engages and indeed penetrates within that which proliferates the very modality of speculative dialectics. And hence, that 'deconstruction', far from simply contesting Hegelian metaphysics, far from simply thinking *against* Hegel, commands, in truth, to reformulate the place and space from which speculative dialectic develops in and for itself whilst *perhaps* also projects itself *beyond* itself.

The problem of the 'beginning' and the idea of 'Life'

The problem of the 'beginning', which Hegel puts forth in the first lines of the *Preface* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – where the Jena philosopher famously contests the very idea of writing a Preface in philosophy⁵ – is repeated at the outset of *The Doctrine of Being in the Science of Logic*⁶ and, albeit in a different manner, through the concept of Life as it is explicated and dialectically determined in the conclusion of this same work. It is in the *Third Section* of the *Science of Logic*, entitled the *Doctrine*

of the *Notion*, that Hegel reveals the 'syllogism' of the 'Absolute Idea' as the speculative determination of Life. This speculative determination is in fact double. Hegel points out that the 'Idea of Life' is grasped as *both* the complete form of the 'syllogism' of the 'Absolute Idea' *and* as a particular moment within this 'dialectical syllogism'. The first, and thus most immediate, determination of the 'Absolute Idea' is defined as Life. The second determination is marked as 'Knowledge' or 'Cognition' (the 'Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good') and the third, that is the 'Absolute Idea in and for itself', the determination in which Spirit recognizes itself *as* itself through its reappropriation as Infinite, is once more termed, by Hegel, as 'Life'. In this sense and through this syllogism, 'Life' appears as the most immediate form of the 'Absolute Idea', its most formal, natural, abstract determination and at the end-point of the 'syllogism', where the 'Absolute Idea' recognizes itself as 'Idea' and thus as 'absolute totality' comprehending itself as 'Infinite Truth'. Which means that Hegel can determine the entire speculative movement of the 'Absolute Idea' as 'Life', and thus as 'Absolute Life': 'Only the Absolute idea is Being, imperishable and unalienable Life; truth comprehending itself as Absolute Life'.⁷

This urges the following question: from one determination of 'Life' to the other, from the 'beginning point' of the speculative syllogism to its completion, does 'Life' itself have, here or there, its proper and own-most meaning? Or, in other words: is 'Life' to be thought as the *immediate* determination of the 'Absolute Idea' or as its speculative reappropriation? For Hegel there ought to be no un-decidability on this question. 'Life' has its singular meaning neither here nor there, neither in one nor the other. Rather, 'Life' is to be thought of as *both* immediate and absolute, as the part and the whole. More precisely, 'Life', for Hegel, produces itself as a concept in the infinite circle of its reappropriation, the infinite return of itself to itself before any particular or singular meaning it can bestow. In this sense, thus, nothing will ever precede the return from 'Life' to 'Life' and everything will happen as if the 'Absolute Idea' – and since the 'Absolute Idea' is always and already that which recognizes itself *as* itself – is both and simultaneously the affirmation of its natural immediate determination and the *Aufhebung* of this immediate form, the suppression and the conservation of its immediacy as speculative absolute 'Life'. In truth, it is always 'Life' which speaks of itself, in and for itself.

Aufhebung: relève

Although, for Hegel, nothing ought to maintain separate these two determinations of 'Life', the immediate and the speculative, the

question still remains: what occurs within their absolute reconciliation? The answer, as just marked, is the *Aufhebung*. Here is thus the first point of Derrida's reading: everything within Hegel happens through the *Aufhebung* of which the French philosopher offers a French translation by suggesting the word '*relève*'. It would here be very important – but too lengthy for the present study – to examine each French translation of the German word *Aufhebung* and consequently bring forth the hermeneutical principles which these different translations command for the interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. Suffice it to say, however, for our purpose here, that the translation of *Aufhebung* by '*relève*' marks, for Derrida, that Hegel's philosophy develops itself within its *contradiction* and through its *negativity*, precisely where these terms signify their own dialectical comprehension and thus their own *Aufhebung*. The Derridian 'supplement' can already here be seen: the *Aufhebung* as '*relève*' uncloses the following reading of Hegel's system of philosophy: the *Aufhebung* consistently and incessantly produces a supplement and thus exceeds itself from that which it is determined. In this sense, the *Aufhebung* is not some invariant dialectical movement predetermined in its own-most meaning and structure, nor is it a formal function whose generality is applied indiscriminately. The *Aufhebung* as '*relève*' is rather the production of a 'supplement' always and already exceeding its own determination.⁸ And Derrida, in appending to the *Aufhebung* the modality of a 'supplement', faithfully follows Hegel's own determination and definition of the speculative movement of this dialectical concept: the *Aufhebung* is subjugated to the same law which it puts forth and develops. In this sense, for Derrida – following Hegel to the letter – the *Aufhebung* gives itself first as immediate, then mediatises itself by negating itself and through this very process of negation *supplements* itself beyond that which it marks and determines. Hence, and in this manner, the *Aufhebung* is the movement which suppresses itself by negating itself and which, within this negation of itself, succeeds to itself, supplements and exceeds itself by elevating itself from itself beyond itself. The *Aufhebung* as '*relève*' thus – and this constitutes its 'truth' – always elevates itself from itself to the point where, for Derrida, Hegel's entire system of philosophy incessantly produces *more* than what it represents or could present. All happens as if Hegel's system of philosophy infinitely supplemented itself, thereby producing itself as that which it does not recognize and never could yet foresee as itself.

Far from simply marking a criticism of Hegel's systematic philosophy of identity and difference, the supplement secretly producing an excess beyond the identification through reconciliation of the

'Absolute Idea', for Derrida, signifies that Hegel is 'also' the thinker of 'irreducible difference'.⁹ Albeit un-thought to Hegel, the speculative system of philosophy produces that which it always thought it could do without in that this very system 'also' opens up the *possibility* of producing an incessant and uncontrollable, unrecognizable and perpetual *differentiation* of itself, a relentless supplement by and through the very reiteration of its own-most affirmation. Hence, the 'question' Derrida puts to Hegel is never to be understood as a critique. It is not even to be seen as a question in the traditional sense of this word, that is, as a contestation which would see in the speculative system of philosophy the 'affirmation of the Same' in which the Other or Difference would be negated or obliterated, and where 'to come out of Hegel' would mean to affirm the predominance or priority of the Other *against* the so-called economy of the Same. In his reading of Hegel, never does Derrida fall into the facility of reducing Hegel's philosophy to a simple philosophy of static and fixated identity or identification. On the contrary, Derrida's reading of Hegel begins with, and consequently sustains, maintains, advances and reengages the very deployment of difference and differentiation in, and as, Hegel's writing. Thus the 'question' Derrida develops from Hegel emanates within Hegel. This means that in a certain sense the 'question' Derrida formulates is produced and advanced by Hegel, deployed and evolving within Hegel: *suspending* Hegel whilst *perpetuating* Hegel. As if Hegel, in elaborating the very actuality of the speculative system of philosophy also produced that which suspends it, that which interrupts it while, at the same time and by the same token, engages its very proliferation, reiteration and reverberation.

Speculative dialectics and deconstruction

Derrida reads Hegel as the thinker of a 'double bind' so radically absolute that it un-decidably produces at once and simultaneously the possibility and the impossibility of speculative dialectics and thus of an absolute system of philosophy. That which brings about the *event* of this implosion and perpetuation within the system of speculative dialectics is, for Derrida, the question, formulated in *Glas*¹⁰: *what is left of meaning within the elaboration of the absolute actuality of meaning?* Or again: *what remains of meaning in the absolute revelation and speculative donation of meaning?* This question lies at the limit of the speculative and cannot be dissociated from another question: does the speculative solely work at relieving that which it relieves, at engendering and engaging that which

its own functioning produces? Or is there, can there be, within its very logic, within its deployment and development, the *event* of *another logic*, equally and symmetrically as forceful as the 'power of Spirit' which is no greater than its expression – a *wholly other logic* which the speculative cannot yet and will never as such foresee but which nonetheless works within it?

In a certain manner – and we can here see the modality by which Derrida reads Hegel at once within the speculative deployment and development of Hegelian metaphysics but also radically outside and wholly otherwise than according to the parameters of this very logic – what is imagined is the double movement of a 'question' at once integrated, resumed, circumscribed by the speculative reappropriation of identity and difference *and* entirely other, foreign, and unfamiliar to this very movement. What is imagined is thus at once another place working within the place of speculative dialectics, and invents a movement which simultaneously interrupts the absolute movement of speculative dialectics while producing it – a modality which both suspends the speculative while incessantly reiterating it always anew. In this sense, what Derrida is persistently searching for in Hegel is the movement which at once opens, leads, advances the speculative itself while never reducing itself to its absolute self-recognition in its own self-reappropriation. The *irreducible other within the same* is the event Derrida is reading and seeking to expound *in Hegel beyond Hegel*.

Notice, however, in Derrida's reading of Hegelian metaphysics, the closeness it maintains and entertains to the very movement of speculative dialectics. For what has speculative dialectics thought if not this very movement of the *other in the same* and inversely of the *other as same*? This proximity between 'deconstruction' and speculative dialectics marks a singular hermeneutic where 'deconstruction' persistently seeks to reveal that which speculative dialectics presupposes, its un-thought, through its absolute modality. For Derrida, thus, speculative dialectics incessantly reveals its own *impossibility* through its affirmed and determined *possibility*. In other words, speculative dialectics, through its own deployment as the actuality of the possibility of 'absolute meaning' reveals its un-thought impossibility. In this sense, for Derrida, speculative dialectics, and the 'work of the negative' it implies, reveals, through its own possibility, a 'negativity' whose 'work' is not reducible to the movement which defines and determines the essence of 'absolute meaning' but rather its own *impossibility*. That is, it incessantly marks its own *possibility as impossibility and inversely its impossibility as its only possible chance*. Hence, through this double

a-dialectical folding of the structure and the movement of speculative dialectics, Derrida opens to a highly powerful and reversing interpretation of the *Aufhebung* itself: the *Aufhebung*, through its own 'work', reveals itself wholly otherwise than as that which it pretends to be, and thus as incessantly producing a 'supplement' of 'negativity' which can never be reappropriated through its own deployment but constantly committed to exceeding it. The *Aufhebung* produces thus a wholly other meaning than the 'absolute meaning' it is meant to determine and for which it is commissioned. Derrida's reading of Hegel seeks thus to read within Hegel a movement or a 'question' which would be at once Hegel's 'question' and wholly other than his 'question'. Or, in other words, 'deconstruction' poses a 'question' wholly other than the one which inscribes itself in the dialectical resolution. In this sense, Derrida's 'question' opens to that which reveals within the movement of this dialectic an entirely un-mastered and unpredictable movement. As if one were to imagine a 'question' so faithfully inscribed in Hegel but which, through this radical faithfulness, would persistently refuse its inscription and incessantly retract itself from the movement of the speculative. And thus which could, *perhaps*, open the sphere of an entirely un-reconciled movement within the deployment of speculative reconciliation.

Under which conditions could we possibly mark this movement, this 'question', which is read at once as a *suspension* and a *proliferation* of the speculative, that is as an event which would interrupt the movement of speculative dialectics and thus which would always come to this movement without it being immediately reappropriated within the absoluteness of its speculative meaning? In other words, how could it be possible to mark this interruption and proliferation of speculative dialectic without this movement being immediately relieved as the very process leading towards the resolution of absolute meaning? Or again, how is it possible to think the limit of dialectic without inscribing it within the movement of a speculative reappropriation and without commanding its *Aufhebung* in the name of Absolute Spirit which would resume its essence? These 'questions', in truth, form but only one which Derrida poses in the opening text of *Margins of Philosophy* entitled *Tympan*: 'Under what conditions, then, could one mark, for a philosopher in general, a limit, a margin that it could not infinitely reappropriate, conceive as its own, in advance engendering and interning the process of its expropriation Hegel again, always, proceeding to its inversion by itself?'¹¹

Approaching the *same* question *otherwise*

It is here, in the reiteration of the 'question', that Derrida does not simply assert a critique of Hegelian metaphysics, but rather *further*s the speculative mediation in a manner that initializes an entirely new and novel reading of Hegel. Derrida reformulates thus this 'question' and its implicit resolution by folding and displacing its intent towards a 'position' which, far from being a critique, could be thought of as an '*approach*'. Thus Derrida, instead of thinking *against* Hegel or of thinking *with* Hegel, summons the reader to *approach* the *same* question Hegel is *approaching*. To approach the *same* question thus: 'Under what conditions, then, could one mark, for a philosopheme in general, a limit, a margin that it could not infinitely reappropriate, conceive as its own, in advance engendering and interning the process of its expropriation Hegel again, always, proceeding to its inversion by itself?' – but *otherwise* than Hegel and *not yet* by acquiescing the absolute reappropriation of speculative dialectics.

That means, by approaching the *same* 'question' *paradoxically* and *obliquely*. For there is a paradox in this approach of the *same* 'question': in approaching the *same* question Hegel and Derrida can both and at once pose the *same* question, without ever consenting in the *same* question being posed and without ever pretending that the *same* question is being posed. Approaching the *same* question would perhaps involve the following paradox: to pose the *same* question without ever supposing or presupposing the *same* question is being posed and without conceding or granting that the *same* question be posed. As if we reached the utmost 'paradoxality' of this 'situation': to pose the *same* question *without* this *same* question being posed; to hear the *same* words *without* these words being heard as the *same*. This 'paradoxality' – which I would here call 'deconstructive' – would emerge out of the meaning of this '*without*' bent out or 'folded out' of the dialectical modality of negation whilst never renouncing the very possibility and perpetuation of this modality, and, in this sense, the possibility of interpreting this *without* as a dialectical negation.

Thus, it is as if Derrida were to pose the *same* question Hegel poses *without* consenting to the *same* question being posed: 'Under what conditions, then, could one mark, for a philosopheme in general, a limit, a margin that it could not infinitely reappropriate, conceive as its own, in advance engendering and interning the process of its expropriation Hegel again, always), proceeding to its inversion by itself?', or

again, and, quoting here Derrida, this time from *'The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology'*: 'What might be a 'negative' that could not be *relevé*? And which, in sum, as a negative, but without appearing as such, without *presenting* itself, that is, without working at the service of meaning, would work?'¹² In this sense and in this way, Derrida approaches the *same* 'question' as Hegel but *otherwise* – and thus Derrida reiterates the entirety of the speculative movement but *otherwise* than by necessarily engaging this movement in its resolution or accomplishment and *not-yet* the place where *'thinking without'* would also mean *'thinking with'* the dialectical modality proper to the speculative reappropriation of meaning. It is through this 'double bind' proper to the very structure of the 'negation' that Derrida can at once and simultaneously think *without* Hegel and *with* Hegel, think what Hegel does not label 'negation' whilst also reiterating the very possibility to think what Hegel calls negation.

This *approach* does not tend towards an opposition to Hegel's dialectical movement, but rather searches for a constant manner of *tracking* the development in which the *Aufhebung* no longer performs its modality *by performing it too well and thereby engaging an all too perfect movement of resolution*. In other words, Derrida marks, at the pinnacle point of speculative dialectics and within its absolute resolution, the manner in which it *fails* to work through and accomplish its infinite movement of reappropriation *by itself*. And thus, this aporetic approach reveals the *event* by which and through which is seen both the implosion of speculative dialectics, implosion by and through its function and movement, and the necessity to retain, preserve and perpetrate its very possibility. The key point to grasp in Derrida's reading is that the very movement of speculative dialectic, when left to its own perfection and resolution, exhausts itself. Derrida is thus here marking the possibility of testifying, both and at the same time, how the speculative performs and how this performance erodes itself in its absolute actuality. And consequently, in which manner this erosion of itself by itself needs and requires *us* to open up speculative dialectics towards that which remains un-thinkable and un-thought: an irreducible, a-dialectical, unconditioned and irreducible idea in which its very dialectical movement and speculative modality are sustained. As if, to *maintain* Hegel, one were to already and always reiterate a *supplementary negation* which, beyond the Hegelian negation, guards and safeguards its very possibility – the very possibility of the speculative system of philosophy. Something like another unconditional and wholly irreducible idea guarding and safeguarding the idea of speculative dialectics – awakening it by suspending it, interrupting it while anwimating it.

Such is the movement of 'deconstruction' within Hegel: to deploy in speculative dialectics the incessant supplementary production of an 'other' beyond it, where un-thought and un-thinkable performatives would proliferate, capable of both suspending and instigating the performance of speculative dialectics. In this sense, Derrida marks that if speculative dialectics were left to itself, it would implode in its own deployment and development. The *deconstructive aporia* is the following: the dialectical process, engaged as it is in its infinite movement of reappropriation, fails to make possible this reappropriation by constantly rendering it effectively realizable. Or in other words, the speculative *impossibilizes* itself as it *possibilizes* itself. This faithfulness to *both* the impossibility and possibility of speculative dialectics would mean in effect the possibility of remaining faithful to a pure idea which would testify of a certain 'constraint'¹³ in the process of Hegel's philosophy.

For Hegel, it is certain that this 'constraint' would be unthinkable: as unthinkable as thinking the limit *without also* thinking the *Aufhebung* of the limit. This 'constraint' would be, for Hegel, as *fantasmatic*, as fantastic and as improbable, as irrepresentable or unnamable. And Hegel would, as always, and of course, be *correct*, as it is probably the very possibility of '*naming*' which is here by Derrida being deconstructed. But it is also here that Hegel would have left speculative dialectics – although produced by the totality of speculative dialectics – un-thought: it is precisely through the unthinkability of '*naming*' its radically other to the speculative that the whole system of speculative dialectic is *possible*.

Conclusion: another future?

This ought to leave us with the improbable task of thinking that *perhaps* Hegel did think this *other future*. Perhaps Hegel did think another future than the future he himself thought completely in and under the horizon of the present. What is certain, and what is most certainly Derrida's own conclusion, is that we will never be able to decide philosophically if Hegel *did* or *did not* think the possibility of a future beyond or before the speculative. We will never be able to philosophically decide if Hegel considered this 'question': what if the *Aufhebung* was so absolute that it would forget everything, and also itself, at the very moment it produces itself, thereby opening towards a wholly other becoming than the one it always predetermines? Perhaps Hegel thought of such an unthinkable future? This 'question' ought to make us think that we will never be finished with the meditation of Hegel's words. And furthermore, that

within Hegel's words we will always, incessantly be searching that which does not reduce itself to what was written. That is, it ought to awaken us to the realization that *perhaps* Hegel was always thinking that which was other than the movement of speculative reappropriation – that perhaps Hegel was thinking an 'other' than the other rendered possible by his philosophical thought. *As if Hegel thought of wholly other meanings than the multiple meanings illuminating the deployment of Hegelianisms ...*

Notes

1. This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Henry S. Harris. PS, 6.
2. On the problem of the 'beginning' in Hegel, and Heidegger's reaction to it, see also Inwood (this volume).
3. See Derrida (1982a). See also Derrida (2005) and Dahlstrom (2008).
4. See Marmasse (this volume).
5. PS, 1: 'It is customary to preface a work with an explanation of the author's aim, why he wrote the book, and the relationship in which he believes it to stand to other earlier or contemporary treatises on the same subject. In the case of a philosophical work, however, such an explanation seems not only superfluous but, in view of the nature of the subject-matter, even inappropriate and misleading. For whatever might appropriately be said about philosophy in a preface – say a historical *statement* of the main drift and point of view, the general content and truth – none of this can be accepted as the way in which to expound philosophical truth'.
6. We know that the *Doctrine of Being*, which forms the first section of the *Science of Logic*, preliminarily expounds the question: 'With What Must the Science Begin?' (SL, 67–78).
7. SL, 824.
8. On *Aufhebung* as 'relève', see Nancy (2001).
9. See Derrida (1988), 26: 'Hegel is *also* the thinker of irreducible difference. He rehabilitated the thought as the *memory productive* of signs. And he reintroduced, as I shall try to show elsewhere, the essential necessity of the written trace in a philosophical – that is, Socratic – discourse that had always believed it possible to do without it; the last philosopher of the book and the first thinker of writing'.
10. Derrida (1986).
11. Derrida, 'Tympan', in (1982b), xv–xvi.
12. Derrida, 'The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology', in (1982b), 107.
13. J. Derrida 'names' this *constraint* in the inherent calculation of the 'speculative machine', this *fold* which at once mimics and puts into abyss the 'speculative machine' from its very systematic functionality, *différance*: 'I am speaking of a relationship between a *différance* that can make a profit on its investment and a *différance* that misses its profit, the investiture of a pure presence and without loss here being confused with absolute loss, with death. Through such a relating of a restricted and a general economy the very project of philosophy, under the privileged heading of Hegelianism,

is displaced and reinscribed. The *Aufhebung* – *la relève* – is constrained into writing itself otherwise. Or perhaps simply into writing itself. Or, better, into taking account of its consumption of writing' (Derrida, *Différance*, in 1982b, 19). On the modality of this 'deconstructive constraint' through speculative dialectics, see Cohen (2009).

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